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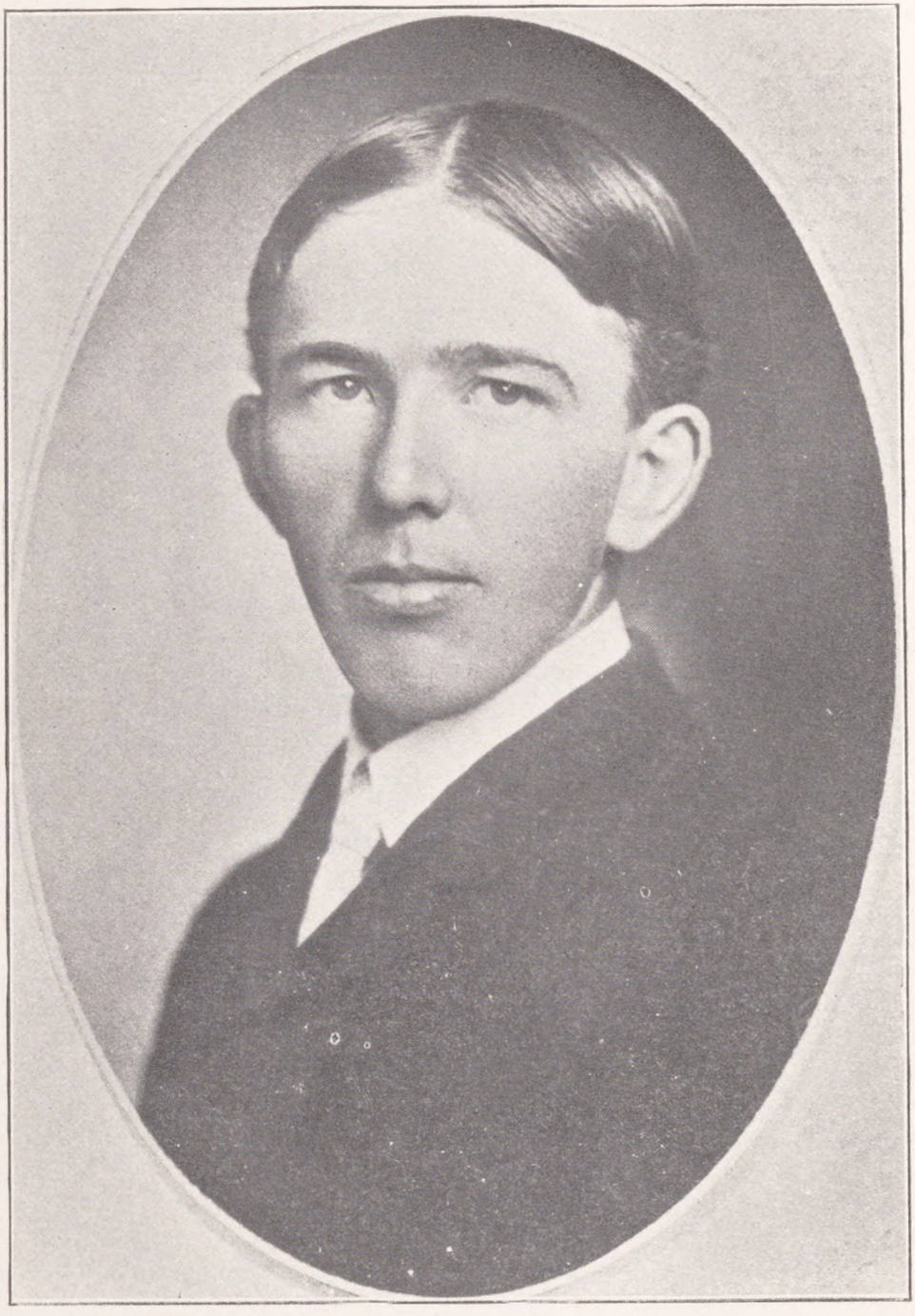


JESSE B. THAXTON.

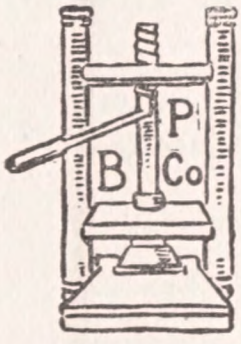
CAIN

OR, THE

VAGABOND OF NOD

BY

JESSE B. THAXTON



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CAIN.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

"But thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.
Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain, for me, night and day."

—TENNYSON.

SILENCE! A stillness intense, which one might think would never end. Every wandering echo was asleep; and on the summer air no breeze disturbed the perfect tranquillity that brooded over the beautiful valley of the Cumberland. Even the song-bird's melody was lulled to sleep in the heavy, sultry air.

When God fashioned the perfect garden of Eden, and forbade the intrusion of sin; when He caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, there in that wonderful moment of Creation's most beauti-

ful conception—that of woman—there was no silence more intense than that which slumbered on the bosom of the Cumberland. The margin of this beautiful river was lined with pebble-banks and fringed with great luxurious clusters of honeysuckles. Beyond these, stretched like a great verdant canvas, was the broad-meadowed valley, bedecked with daisies and clover blossoms. One beholding the beautiful valley is at once reminded of the flowery meads of Sicily.

In the distance stretched the woodland foliage, dim and purplish,—the proudest boast of sylvan production. The tall oaks and poplars seemed to be trying to tower in majesty above each other; and, up there, among their uppermost foliage, a faint breeze was stirring. The brilliant sun, apparently taking advantage of the opportunity, gilded the crimped silvery sides of the upturned leaves and painted everything else with similar hues. The transmuting hand of the legendary Midas had touched all things around, and converted them into gold.

There was a little brook that stole its way from under a ledge of rocks hidden away in a dense wild-wood east of the river and wound its meandering course through the rocks and rapids near its source, then unrolled itself, like a silver ribbon, across the narrow plain, penetrating the foliage of ferns and overlapping honeysuckles, till at last it found itself lost in the body of the Cumberland. All was a wonderful, dreamful existence; and under the soothing power of Morpheus in the beauty of that summer afternoon, like an everlasting and ever-sleeping somnipathist.

A slender girl, twelve years old, stood under the shade of a large, beautiful apple-tree, by the trembling, rippling brook, dabbling in the clear water with a broken reed. She had been sitting there, reading her New Testament, and fatuitously lifted her eyes to the brook, when she noticed two little fish swimming near the surface of the clear pool. With a suppressed and smothered cry of delight, she threw her Testament upon the grass, and, enjoining silence by placing her finger upon her lips, went cautiously near the water's edge. At her approach they darted away and vanished. She stood for some moments gazing across the grain-fields toward the south, while she splashed the water with her reed.

In her beautiful brown eyes there was a fascination. There lurked in their mild, sparkling depths a singularly charmful pensiveness, mingled with tender love and childish happiness; the flexible red lips stood listlessly apart, and there was a mutiable expression on their gracefully curved lines of perfection; while the full, polished, classical forehead, with its noble excellency, could not fail to engender in the mind and heart of the ordinary observer as well as of the skilled physiognomist, a vision of her beautiful face which could never be forgotten. Her hair was of a beautiful chestnut hue, the beauty of which was increased by the few tiny waves intermingled in the tresses which hung around her shoulders.

She stooped down, and with her little hands dipped what water they would hold, and quickly showered the cold drops upon her head, laughing gleefully as the little streamlets trickled down

over the white roses with which she had crowned her beautiful hair. As she laughed, her parted lips revealed perfect teeth which gleamed like rare pearls between the flexible red lips. The music of her laughter was like a stray chant of an Orphean lyre—so powerful was its fragment of melody.

She wore a sleeveless dress made of pink dimity, and a little bodice in it served to show her soft white throat and to admit the cool breezes. She wore a string of diamond beads set with bits of pearl and polished opals, about her neck. She had a peculiarly fanciful desire to wear this costly necklace, because of its singular significance relating to her earlier history.

Her merry laugh at her baptismal performance had brought a rosy tint upon her pretty face, and long after the water had ceased dripping from her glistening hair, the smile was still gleaming in her eyes and on her cheeks.

A few steps in advance of her, stood a large white albatross, which seemed in his grandeur to outrival the beauty of his kind and as if he would feign scorn his fellow sea-creatures.

In the strange stillness and solemn beauty of this summer late afternoon, the girl seemed to have forgotten herself entirely; but, as she lingered, the sun lowered his regal self near the horizon and paused, seemingly, as if to hear the faint requiem which had begun to murmur among the chestnuts and oaks and poplars, then dropped behind the horizon, and left the scene for twilight's gentle display. At last the hired-man's homeward singing, across the glen where he had

labored all day, admonished her that the day had given place to a charming twilight; and she heaved a long-drawn sigh, as if just aroused from a short sleep. She advanced one step toward home, when she caught the pageant glory of the calm evening, and stopped to look at it. The beautiful albatross waddled along the path ahead of her. He was her dearest friend and playmate, and his graceful bearing showed that he had been trained and fondled. As he walked on slowly, he tossed his regal head proudly, as if he were proud of his majesty, Royal King Felix.

While the girl beheld the beautiful scene about her, she smiled as if her soul were gratified. She knew nothing of the strifes and struggles and hardships of the outside world. To her all was a tranquil dream of love and peace. Her young heart was as guileless as the spirit of an angel, and she stood drinking in the charm of that peaceful twilight with a heart full of innocence and joy. She was nature's child, and loved the babbling brooks, the gentle breezes, the singing birds, the beautiful flowers, her friend, Royal King Felix, and those who cared for her.

She stooped to pick up her book which she had left upon the grass under the apple-tree; and suddenly thought of a passage of Scripture which she had just read from the Prophecy of Jeremiah before she left home, and rising in all her childish majesty, she stretched her dimpled, snow-white hands and arms over her head, and repeated with gravity and eloquence:—

"'The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his lands waste. . . . How

beautiful upon the land are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; . . . . that sayeth unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.' "

These words of divine inspiration had become indelibly written upon her memory; and who knew what good they were destined to do some day?

She walked on up the daisy-lined pathway, banging on her knees as she walked the tin bucket in which she had been carrying water to the laboring man whose homeward song had caused her to realize that the day had lain down to sleep,—and the prophecy burst once more from her lips:—

" 'The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his lands waste.' "

Mamie Homean was an orphan girl, who only vaguely remembered her mother, and who had entirely forgotten her father, so early in life had she lost them. She was found by Mr. Homean one day, drifting about in a boat near the shore of Nova Scotia. He rescued her and brought her to his home on the Cumberland river. No one knew her identity. She was a lost child upon the mercies of the world, and her only vigil was the God for whose great kingdom she worked and pleaded years afterward.

When Mr. Homean found her, she was so weak from excessive hunger that she could scarcely speak. Being a child of only three years she could never tell them who her parents were.

Mr. Homean's mansion was some ten or twelve miles from Nashville; and, being hidden away in

a dense forest near the river, made a fit location for a hermitage. The mansion was a beautiful edifice of brick; and, at each corner, exquisite, luxuriant creepers embellished the building with their coiling tendrils. The yard and house were amply shaded by the finest specimens of the sugar-tree. A clear, sparkling spring gushed out from the bluff south of the house. From the eminence upon which the mansion stood, one could see the beautiful Cumberland river. The location was magnificent. Babylon, with all her boasted opulence and fortifications and luxury before the Medo-Persian invasion and conquest, could not have offered a palace more desirable than the Homean mansion with all its luxuries of peace and tranquillity. There was no one living near it for miles around, and a visit from a neighbor was a very rare event in the daily routine of the home. Therefore the child grew up without the advantage of any associates or playmates. Her time was almost entirely occupied in studying the lessons which Mrs. Homean assigned her, and she, as a natural consequence, became a close, thoughtful student. From the time she first crossed Mr. Homean's threshold she had displayed a great taste for books and literature in general; and Mr. Homean spared no little time and money in procuring the proper literature for her. It was too far away to send the young child to school, therefore Mrs. Homean became her faithful governess, teaching her the truths of the religion of the Christ which had been inculcated into her pure little soul by that mother whom she had not altogether forgotten. After her lessons

were recited, she was allowed to go out among the birds and flowers, and seek such pleasures and amusements as her childish notions would dictate. To her childish nature, every gentle breeze was a breath of inspiration; every bird-song was a familiar voice, to which she often responded with a merry laugh; and every beautiful flower was a poem of love. She spent hours wading up and down the brook and in building dams to catch the water in a deeper pool that her faithful friend, Royal King Felix, might have a pond to swim in. She constructed flutter-mills along the brook, and built little ships and boats and floated them about over the water. During her earlier years Mr. Homean would carry her to his woodshop, place her on the shavings and give her a little primer that she might spell and read and look at the pictures while he toiled away at his work-bench. When this failed to interest her, she would gather up the bits of sawed blocks and build playhouses out under the poplar-tree that stood in front of the shop.

Mr. Homean was a very wealthy man, yet he had always been a laboring man, working as a carpenter. He boasted of his brawny muscles and strong, healthy body, and excessively indulged the fanatical opinion that he who obtained his daily subsistence other than by daily labor was not sincerely honest. His father had died when the son was only sixteen years of age, leaving him the only heir of the valuable homestead on which he continued to live, and to a legacy of several million dollars, which he carefully preserved, claiming that it was no part of his honest earnings. He

was a man sixty years old, and had accumulated a handsome sum of money at his trade,—this he called his own.

Mrs. Homean had been a woman of society; but when she married Mr. Homean, she became his faithful and devoted companion, isolating herself entirely from the social circles of Nashville, and choosing to share the love of her kind husband in his hermitage home.

They had had no children; and when Mamie Homean was brought into their home, they lavished excessive affection upon her. She was the idol of their hearts. Therefore, being the only child in that neighborhood, and being constantly associated with old and thoughtful people, is it any wonder that she grew up to be such a thoughtful, earnest child, almost prematurely?

Mr. Homean's library was amply furnished with the purest selections of literature, to which, of course, Mamie had free access.

And now, when we begin our story of her, at the age of twelve, we find her with a pure heart, full of love for nature, love for books, an earnest piety and deep religious enthusiasm, the noblest traits of a young soul left to wander over the rugged highways of life with the only pilot of Truth to guide her, which principles she imbibed from the pages of the purest literature. From her early childhood she had been inspired with a peculiar ambition by the words of the Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount, "Let your light so shine that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It was this which filled her heart with such a wonderful re-

ligious enthusiasm, which in after years brought forth fruit in abundance. It was this that pictured to her youthful mind the holy conception of a beautiful world whose people did glorify the Father which is in heaven, and where all was love and peace and happiness. And not until the fatal hour when she saw horrors of murder and suicide, did she know that her race was pollutted with such blackness of sin. This was the first mad wave to sweep over her shell-built palace of peace and fidelity and wash it away. This was the first key that opened life's great mystery; and she heard the first knell of a shattered and dying confidence. And it is no wonder that Mamie Homean was shocked and horrified at the sight of what is a common occurrence in the conventional world—Murder and Suicide!

CHAPTER II.

JUST twelve miles from Nashville stood Mr. Homean's mansion, shaded with a beautiful grove of sugar-trees, the finest production of Cumberland mountain. Only one solitary road led past his house, about a quarter of a mile away.

His woodshop was an amply furnished establishment, where he worked day after day, making fancy doors, window-sashes, furniture, etc. There was only one workman who helped him in his shop, his name being Alton Tolliver.

Alton Tolliver was a Nashville "dude" who had come to Mr. Homean's workshop just a few weeks before our story begins, and had applied for apprenticeship under Mr. Homean, who willingly and cordially granted him the place. Just why this young man had chosen to leave the society and varied amusements of city life to take up an occupation of daily labor in a lonely, secluded country workshop is hard to say.

Alton Tolliver had chanced that way one afternoon on his bicycle. He had lost his way, and had stopped at the woodshop to inquire his way back to Nashville and to rest and cool a moment. While there, little Mamie Homean came to the shop, carrying a bucket of water to Mr. Homean.

Her face was slightly flushed by the exercise, adding greatly to her loveliness as she stood with childish innocence regarding the stranger with his bicycle. Once he smiled, and she quickly averted her gaze and a fain expression of contempt flitted across her face; it was a strange, doubtful smile. She saw something in those eyes that she could not trust. She did not tarry long at the shop, but hurried back to the house. The boy passed on after he had rested; but it was some lovely charm in the beautiful face of the child that caused him to come back afterward and apply for the apprenticeship. To his disappointment, she always managed to stay at home until Alton had gone to his boarding-place, then she would join Mr. Homean and stay with him till twilight began to steal over the land, then take him home, where a delicious supper always awaited him.

Mamie was out among the flowers, wading the dewy grass. Mr. Homean had left his pipe and tobacco, and Mamie had brought it to him and was on her way home. On this particular morning Alton had been detained and was later getting off to his work than usual, and, besides, he had chosen to come another route than the usual one. On his way he chanced to meet Mamie, who was gathering flowers alone the path.

"Good morning, Miss Homean," he bowed, and saluted her.

"Good morning," she responded briefly, and turned away toward the shop.

"I would be pleased to walk with you, Miss Homean?"

"I choose to be alone, thank you." She walked on faster.

"But here, child," he insisted, "here is something valuable for you."

She turned her head to see what it was, and he held up a beautiful gold band.

"It is yours if you will accept it."

She stopped and held out her hand, but kept her eyes toward the ground. He slipped the ring on her finger, then clasped the little white hand in his so tightly that she almost cried out from the pain.

"Now, may I walk with you?"

"I beg your pardon, sir. I am not accustomed to walk with strangers. And why have you given me this ring? It is very beautiful."

"It is a token of my respect for you, and——"

"Regard for me?" and she repeated it half to herself as she looked down at the ring.

He lifted his hat and started away.

She remembered his face years afterward. It was a face with a strange, doubtful expression on it. The keen black eyes gave a magnetic hint of something like a dangerous spirit and warned one not to trifle with it. The fiendish smile that sometimes lurked in them always repelled and chilled the spirit, and Mamie shuddered with a sense of foreboding danger when she caught a glimpse of his visage.

She walked on toward her home. Accustomed to ramble alone through the woods, she walked leisurely along the cool, shady woods-road, now and then inhaling the fragrance of the beautiful flowers which she had gathered, and pausing oc-

casionally to watch the mocking-birds as they would perch upon the branches over her head and trill their grand morning hymn. The unbroken calm of that beautiful morning, the cool, still atmosphere and the tranquil sunshine filled her pure, guileless soul with a rapture of divine inspiration, and she began to sing:

"O, the morning, happy morning,
That will break on the other shore,
When the march of life is ended,
And our harvest work is o'er!"

Before she could finish the song, the clatter of horses' hoofs and the rattle of carriage wheels broke the melody of her hymn, and she looked back as a rough voice shouted impatiently:

"Look out there, kid, or a horse's hoof will crush your head!"

The driver checked his beautiful span of iron-grays till the child could get out of the way; then a kinder voice spoke to her:

"Good morning."

"Good morning," she responded, and glancing up she saw a tall, strong man, well dressed, descending from the carriage. He lifted his hat and smiled pleasantly. He took a little china mug from the driver's hand, and took a drink from the little spring near by.

"How far yet to Mr. Homean's house?" inquired the driver of the gentleman.

"About a quarter of a mile," was the gentle answer. Then turning to the girl, he asked:

"Are they well to-day—I mean Mr. and Mrs. Homean?"

"Yes sir, they are well."

"What is your name, please?"

"Mamie Homean."

He glanced at the driver, and said as he smiled, "I told you so;" and turning to the child he said so tenderly that she never forgot it:

"Yes, that is your name, God bless you; and some time you will not only know my name, but you will know *me!*"

He lifted his hat and climbed back into the carriage, bidding the driver to drive on. When they disappeared behind the clump of trees which stood near a bend of the road, Mamie found herself gazing earnestly and steadfastly after the carriage. The flowers had dropped from her listless hands, and a strange, wistful expression lingered about the parted crimson lips and the big, brown eyes in whose tender depths could be seen the mirrored beauty of a passionate, sensitive, but earnest soul. Something had awakened in her dreaming heart and faintly stirred, and a restless look stole over her countenance as she sighed and stooped to pick up the flowers and started home. She pondered in her mind why the gentleman had seemed so interested in Mr. and Mrs. Homean; why he had said that she would not only know his name some day, but that she would know him; who he was. He was so handsome and so pleasant.

When she came in sight of the house, she saw the carriage and horses standing at the fence. Something startled her, and she stood still. Her heart fluttered, and a pleasant sensation, mingled with dread, touched her heart. While she hesi-

tated, she heard a voice calling her from the house, and glancing up, she saw Mrs. Homean standing at the yard gate, beckoning her to come on. Then she hurried on, skipping and twirling along the smooth, hard pathway. When she reached the gate, she saw that there was a happy smile upon Mrs. Homean's face, and that a few stray tears lingered among the blushes on her cheeks.

"Why, mamma, you have been crying!" said Mamie, as Mrs. Homean folded her in her arms and kissed her.

"Hush, child; I have cause to cry. Leland has come home to visit us. Oh, I am so glad! He is in the drawing-room, waiting to meet you."

Mrs. Homean led the child into the drawing-room, and Leland Burnett rose as they entered.

Mr. Burnett bowed with demure grace over the little hand that was placed in his, and a radiant smile sparkled mischievously in his eyes as he saluted her. There was a brief silence, and their eyes drank in the beauty which each saw in the other's eyes. Down through all the ages of time, these supreme moments of silence have been cherished as the sweetest, ineffable golden moments of delight. They are the moments when the celestial seraph of Love knocks at the door of the heart and awakens a dormant, noble passion; startles the sensitive, quiescent soul; inflicts a painless wound, then pours in the oil of ardent passion, and enters and proclaims himself king!

Leland was an orphan also. He had been taken from the streets of Nashville, a poor, ragged newspaper boy, by Mr. Homean, and brought to the

Homean mansion, where he found a beautiful home. He was now a tall, strong, handsome young man, with black hair, which curling in glossy clusters about his temples showed his massive forehead with exquisite charm. His features were fair, almost effeminate, and his passionate black eyes seemed to be flashing jewels set in the face of an alabaster statue. They flashed a wonderful magnetic power when they turned upon any one with a sudden sweeping gaze. They were full of passion of the deepest and noblest sort, and when they smiled, they revealed the fact of his wonderful intellect. His lips were expressive of firmness of character, and they would always remain closed, except when he was talking or laughing, when they would disclose a regular line of beautiful white teeth. Mr. Homean had kept him in school every year since he had become an inmate of the home. He entered school in Nashville at the age of eleven, and in a few years prepared himself to enter the Vanderbilt University, where he had completed the theological course a short time before he came home to visit those to whom all his success as a brilliant scholar was and should be attributed—Mr. and Mrs. Homean. He had done well at the University, and had received the highest honors. This was his first visit home in several years, for during the vacations the student traveled in the east for recreation, therefore he and Mamie had never before seen each other. But Mamie had often heard Mr. and Mrs. Homean speak of the orphan boy whom they had rescued from the jaws of ignorance and poverty, and had brought up to live a purer, nobler, more ambitious

life; and she had imbibed a deep, warm, but secret sympathy for the dear unknown orphan boy. She had longed to see him; and when, at last, she realized that he had indeed come home, the surprise was almost too great for her. Leland had longed to see the beautiful child ever since he had first heard that she was living with his foster-parents. He loved all things and everybody that were good, and very special had been his affection for this child of whom he had read so many lovely things. Mrs. Homean had said that she was noble, gentle and intelligent.

In the afternoon Mamie escorted Mr. Burnett down to the little spring where they had first met, and there they rested and talked a long time. The evening was serene, and they were pleased to talk about it; the birds were joyful, and they were merry with them; when they looked toward heaven they saw Love smiling upon them; when they looked into each other's eyes, they were filled with rapture to see Love smiling there also. The while that they were there was the supreme hour when the rapture of two souls blended into one heavenly song and sang their first song of love. In the ecstasy of that little hour of romance, they forgot that they started to the woodshop to greet Mr. Homean; and Mamie, at length realizing the fact, suggested that they should be going.

The sun had wandered near the horizon, and the road was cool and shady. Mrs. Homean overtook them just before they reached the shop. She had been running, and was very much exhausted. The exercise had flushed her face till it looked like the blushing face of a maiden; and when

Mamie suddenly looked around, she laughed and exclaimed:

"Why, just look at mamma's face, Leland! It looks, I imagine, like Rachel's did when Jacob kissed her."

Leland laughed heartily.

"Ah, children," said Mrs. Homean, mischievously, as she held out a basket of big ripe strawberries, "do you think my Jacob will kiss me when I give him these?"

"O, mamma! would a kiss from our lips purchase that basket and its contents? If so, we will shower your face over with kisses!"

"Wait till we reach the shop; then we will serve an evening repast in honor of the good 'Carpenter.' "

There was a happy re-union when the good old carpenter met Leland. It was a delightful event after his day's hard work to meet one so dear, one who had been gone so long, one who shared his sincere confidence and highest esteem.

Late that afternoon, or rather, that evening, they all rested under the shade of the large poplar tree and ate strawberries and laughed and talked till twilight began to wrap its maze of dusk about the hills and valleys and forests. A new moon did its best to dispel the approaching darkness, and the vast universe of stars yielded forth a feeble yet sufficient light to make the way agreeably visible for them. A whippoorwill sang his mournful song down among the honeysuckles near the river. The evening was so still and "lonesome" that to the morose character it would be dreary in-

deed; but to the four who walked in its cool calm, it was very pleasant.

As day after day passed, Leland became more and more delighted with the novelty of spending his vacation in the country, free from the everlastingly obnoxious whirl and din of a sultry city, and at peace with God. Many days did Mamie and Leland spend fishing along the fishing streams; then they would go out driving in the late afternoons; or sit in the cool, shady grove, and read and talk. Leland's presence in the home made Mamie's heart glad and served to break the monotony of a companionless life. She became greatly interested in his happiness. Her every thought was for him. Each morning she rose early, and was out among the flowers, clipping the dewy roses to make a beautiful bouquet; and when Burnett came to the breakfast table he always found the exquisite bouquet by his plate. From the very first time they met at the little spring, there had been engendering in their hearts a wonderfully strange attachment for each other; and day after day, as they were constantly associated together, this attachment grew stronger; and almost unconsciously Leland began to love the beautiful child-girl with an ardency that was wonderful to realize.

For weeks all was quiet, and not one event aside from the ordinary occurred. A peaceful calm brooded over the land. But one night near the dreary hour of midnight, Burnett had not yet desisted from his theological studies, he heard a knocking at his door. He rose to open the door,

and there stood Mr. Homean with a cautious cunning smile in his dark gray eyes.

"Come in, sir," said Leland, and Mr. Homean put out his hand to enjoin silence; then he quietly stepped in. He was careful to fasten the door securely; then he sat down and began in a low, cautious tone:

"Leland, you are now twenty-one years of age. Since you have been under my care and supervision, you have been a most trustworthy and obedient boy. I have loved you, I believe, more than any father could love a child of his own; and doubtless you will not be with me much longer, which fact pains me very much. But we all have to succumb to the inevitable. Your integrity is beyond question. I know you feel greatly indebted to me for my kindness in lifting you from a lowly life of poverty, but you owe me nothing but to love me as you always have done; and, besides, your goodness, your success at college, and, above all, your obedience as a dutiful child, has sufficed to pay a thousand times over the debt which you doubtless feel under obligation to pay.

"Now your age entitles you to your share in the estate which I possess. I shall now equally divide my capital between you and the child Mamie; and you shall share equally in the possession of this homestead. It shall belong to you both at the death of my wife and me. But this legacy is a very small gift compared to the great blessing which I have conferred upon you by educating you both, and successfully teaching you the religion of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and to love Him because He first loved us. This, I

say, is the greatest of all blessings; and I am so happy to-night with the fact that my efforts have not been wholly in vain."

Burnett's eyes shone with tears as he clasped the hand of his benefactor, saying in a fervent tone:

"Indeed, it has proved a blessing to me. I shall never be able to repay the debt of gratitude I owe you."

"Don't mention it," put in Mr. Homean. "I want you to come with me, and I will reveal to you what I have long kept a secret. Follow me."

They rose quietly and passed out through the corridor till they came to a shrouded chamber at the rear, where Mr. Homean stopped suddenly. Igniting a match, he passed in, followed by Leland, and lighted a lamp. Among the many curiosities and beautiful vase-casket and books, there was a beautiful ebony casket, embellished with touches of silver and ivory. Mr. Homean took up this pretty shrine from among the others, and touched a secret spring, when it opened with a dull click. It was in this that he kept his money. He proceeded to count out the money which he proposed to will to the orphans. When he had completed he remarked:

"There is my legacy, which shall henceforth be yours and Mamie's."

"But why should you give it to me?" said Leland, surprised. "I do not deserve it, and——"

"Hush, hush!" commanded Mr. Homean, sternly. "You have no right to hesitate. You must take it and use it for the cause of Christ. By proper management you can accomplish much

with it, my son. Now follow me, and this night's errand shall be finished."

He closed the casket, replaced it among the others, and led the way. They left the house and walked quietly down to the shop. There was a tall man standing under the large poplar-tree. Mr. Homean addressed him as "Colonel," and asked if all things were in readiness. The man answered "Yes," and drew from his pocket a copy of the will which gave Leland Burnett and Mamie Homean possession of the legacy and made them heirs of the Homean estate. Mr. Homean signed the will in the presence of two witnesses—distant neighbors. The legal form was completed, and they all dispersed.

That night Leland Burnett could not go to sleep. It had been a strange, eventful night for him. He was the possessor of a fortune and guardian of Mamie Homean. The latter seemed to be a great responsibility devolving upon him. It was a great blessing with a great responsibility attached to it. He thanked God for the blessing, and prayed that he might be equal to the responsibility. How rapidly he had come from poverty and ignorance to wealth and learning. Why had he thus been favored? Yet he was humble. His highest conception of his insignificant being was that he was only a mere floating atom cast out upon the tempest-tossed sea of humanity. He was a mere being constituting only an infinitesimal part of the great human vortex. Ah, how well he remembered when he was a poor boy cast out upon the cold charity of a cruel people.

It was just before day began to dawn when

Leland closed his eyes; then, as he took his last dreamy look through the curtains of his window at the pale moon which had crept down among the trees, he uttered these strange words:

"Mamie—Mamie—the orphan—my orphan—my love!"

He sighed deeply and fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

It was several weeks after the night on which the will was made that Leland and Mamie walked down to the little spring. It was a pleasant evening, and the breezes stirred among the leaves and blossoms which laded them with their fragrance as they passed.

They took their seats upon a bench near by, to get a breath. Mamie laid a bouquet of pansies in his hand, and smiled with a lovely air of satisfaction as she did so. But she noticed a frown darken in his face for a moment, then pass entirely away. She was troubled, and looked another way, sighing heavily.

"Flowers are full of tender passion; they love me. They will not wilt in my hands as quickly as they will in yours! Why, Leland?"

"I suppose it is because you love them. Such pure love as your pure heart possesses is enough to sustain any poor, broken flower."

Her child-like simplicity did not comprehend his meaning. She laughed a short, mirthful laugh, and responded:

"That is surely a compliment for me. Many thanks."

There was a silence for several minutes, during

which Burnett looked meditatively into the clear spring as if some serious thought had taken possession of him. Then he looked up at Mamie, with a strange, tender look in his eyes, and asked: "Who gave you that ring on your finger?"

"I promised not to tell."

"Oh, that will not matter; you can tell me. Surely you can trust me."

She looked up at him, her big, brown innocent eyes full of consternation.

"Why, how could you mean that?"

He did not answer her, but looked at her with his keen glance of criticism, while a troubled look flashed in his black eyes. Mamie regarded him curiously, then asked:

"Leland, would you dare to think such dissimulation justifiable?"

He looked at her with tears in his eyes, and grasped her hand so tightly that it pained her. He did not answer, but a tremor swept across his lips, and a groan escaped them. Mamie became a little bit frightened, and, endeavoring to release her hand, said:

"Leland, you are ill; let us be going home."

"Yes, I am ill,—strangely ill. I may never recover from it, though I may live to a good old age. Perhaps some day you will know the nature of my illness."

They did not see the glare of two jealous eyes looking through the leaves and branches at them. It was Alton Tolliver, who had left the shop, and was on his way home, when he heard them talking and had hidden himself to watch and to listen.

Mamie nervously twisted the ring on her finger, but said nothing. She could not trust herself to look at Burnett. She felt that his keen, intelligent, magnetic eyes could read every secret of her heart. After a long pause she spoke:

"When do you think you will begin to preach?"

"The first of the coming year."

"Do you rejoice in the hope of the salvation which you will preach?"

"Yes, I do, very much."

"I imagine one who studies God's Word, and preaches it, never grows weary of life."

"Ah, child! Your fancy blinds you. There is no life without shadows darkening its way. There are times in life when one loses confidence in all things, and hates existence. It is when that vacancy in the yearning heart fails to be filled with the heart's satisfaction."

"You are weary sometimes, then?"

"Yes, indeed!"

She sighed heavily, and was silent again; then she spoke with a tender, sorrowful tone which echoed in the dreary solitudes of Burnett's heart with a melody that he never forgot:

"Perhaps you are right about life. I don't know. Let's go home; it is getting late."

They rose and went on their way home. Mamie had weighed his words in her mind; and, in spite of her, she began to feel that "vacancy" of which he had spoken. Life! What was it after all? Would she find it all a base fatuity, as he had intimated?

They reached the house, and after supper all retired to their respective rooms.

The moon silvered the foliage of the trees and painted a beautiful dream over all the still valley of the Cumberland. Its cold, cheerless light fell over the woodland like a magnetic touch of Morpheus, and the silence of night fell upon the sombre scene. Just one solitary cricket clanked his tinkling cymbals together, and with an occasional croaking of a tree-frog made a discordant duet. The distant murmur of the water dashing against the shore fell now and then upon the night's stillness.

Burnett had retired, but he had not slept, for the face of the child, Mamie, haunted his waking hours. Its sweet, innocent and beautiful expression touched the tenderest chords of his heart. But she was just a child; why did he care for one so young? Yes, why this mortal passion, Love? Let this question be answered, and the mystery is solved. He tossed his weary head about, and looked out through the window of his room. By this time the moon had long since climbed its weariless course toward the zenith, and was showering its soft smile of light upon the slumbering hills and meadows and blinking dewdrops. Great fleecy clouds lingered, like suspended myriads of pearls, beneath it, and the gentle breeze chanted a melody of "good-night."

He rose from his bed, lighted his lamp, and seated himself by the open window, where the nocturnal breezes wafted vigor and refreshment to him. While he sat there, he heard footsteps on the terrace below, and leaning far out, he saw the figure of a woman moving slowly and cautiously down the path toward the shop. The fig-

ure was wrapt in a shawl, but Burnett failed to recognize her. Some strange impulse of intuition or telepathy touched his heart, and he descended noiselessly from his room into the corridor, then down the path in pursuit of the figure he had seen from his window. Once upon the road he stopped to look and listen. He saw far down the moonlight road the object of his attention, moving leisurely along. He quickened his steps until he was very near her. He was careful to keep within the shadows and to make no noise.

At length she reached the little spring, and looked all about her, as if she felt the presence of some one. She shook her head with an air of satisfaction, and knelt beside the bench near by, and began to talk to herself:

"Here is where I first met him; here is where his smiles touched my heart; here is where his sweet voice told me that I would know him some day." She hushed a moment, then began: "I have come out here to pray for him. It may be wrong to love him, but it isn't wrong to pray for him. But do I love him? Surely not, for I am just a child. I know nothing of love; but I will pray for him."

And she bowed her head upon her hand.

She lifted her glorious, inspired face toward heaven and the light of the stars and the moon fell around about her. Burnett, who had been listening, could not restrain himself longer, and he sprang forward and clasped the child to his bosom. He pressed a kiss upon the sweet, parted lips; he looked down into her eyes, which were gazing full into his, and for some minutes "love

looked love to love" through the joylit realm of holiest affections where each precious soul touched together on "limpid waves of ecstatic feeling." Again he strained her to his heart, and while she hid her face against his shoulder, she heard him say as if in a dream:

"My darling! My darling! My only hope in the world! May God keep you thus pure and innocent throughout the beautiful springtime of your tender life. Mamie, I love you! May God give you to me in heaven!"

He pressed one kiss upon her face, then put her from him. There was a strange agony burning in his eyes as he stood there for a moment looking at her; and she saw, as the bright moonlight fell full upon him, his despairing face. He took her little hand in his, pressed it tightly, and, bowing over it, he said in a mournful tone:

"Farewell, Mamie; I am going—going——"

He said no more, but sprang past her, and she saw with bewildered eyes his form disappear beyond the wood-lane. She saw him no more. But with a pitiful, smothered cry, she hid her face in her hands and wept.

Advancing one step, she shook back her hair, pressed her fingers to her throbbing temples, and stood listening to the murmur of the rippling brook,—to the short, startling plaint of a lonely dove nestled among the green leaves in some distant tree; and, as if death had touched her with its icy hand, her face grew paler and her nerves weak and faint. She struggled, weak, and sick, toward home. When she reached her room, she fell helpless and unconscious. Mrs. Homean heard

the noise, and hurried to see what it was. When she reached the room, she found the child prostrate on the floor. She called loudly for Mr. Homean and Leland. The former came to her aid. They placed Mamie on the little bed, and bathed her forehead and face with cold water. But it was some time before she returned to consciousness; then she began weeping, and hid her face against her pillow, while her whole body shook with convulsive sobs. As the night wore away, she revived very much; and when morning broke over the land with a glorious dawn, she managed to rise from her bed and walk out to the gate.

She was standing there at the gate, looking at the band of happy birds gathering in the trees, when suddenly her eyes fell upon an envelope lying on the gate-post, addressed to her. She seized it eagerly, but scarcely dared open it, as she dreaded knowing its contents. However, with trembling fingers she tore open the sealed missive, drew out the folded sheet and read:

DEAR MAMIE:

When you will have read this, I shall have gone away to roam over the great world. Tell Mr. and Mrs. Homean to be contented with my absence, and not to doubt me because of my sudden departure, for it was absolutely necessary that I depart when I did. I shall come back to see you all some day. Until then, may God's richest benedictions rest upon you all, is the prayer of one who loves you all. Most affectionately,

LELAND.

Mamie's fingers spasmodically clutched the paper. She staggered forward, leaned her head against the gate, and wept with bitterest grief. How long she stood there she knew not; but she was finally aroused by Mrs. Homean, who touched her on the arm, and, somewhat alarmed, asked: "What is the matter, Mamie?"

Mamie looked up sadly, and, with a bitter smile, she handed the letter to Mrs. Homean, saying:

"I found it on the gate-post—read for yourself."

Mrs. Homean took it and read it. While she read, a shadow of pain flitted across her face and a tremor passed across her lips. When she finished, she threw it aside, and gathered the child in her arms.

"Oh, child, why did he go away? But how can you tell? Oh, he has gone away from me!"

Mamie quickly hid her face against Mrs. Homean's bosom, for she felt that the good woman could read her very thoughts. "Ah, yes," she thought, "I could tell you why he went away."

Poor Mrs. Homean's heart was broken. Leland had gone and how strangely. He had gone away without a good by, and this made her heart bleed.

It was several weeks after Burnett left before Mamie resumed her studies, then for hours she could be found in the library poring over the pages of Grecian lore, and rapidly grasping the principles of more modern literature. The desire to become a scholar of deep erudition like the Scaligers had seized her with an unalterable de-

termination. The study of the Christian Orthodoxy, of the faith of Brahmanism, of Asiatic Buddhism and of ancient Paganism, together with that of Greek and Roman Mythology, constituted her curriculum of studies. These engendered a lasting impression in the child's memory, and kindled her ambition to a still greater zeal. She compared the Christian Faith to the inconsistencies of these heathen doctrines; and, as she observed the great depravity between them, she resolved to exert her every effort in her future life to thwart the evils of Paganism and to establish the Faith as it is in Christ.

Mamie was more inclined to roam through the woods and over the fields alone than ever before. She took long strolls, and sometimes stayed very late. Mrs. Homean had noticed this and talked to Mr. Homean about it, but he declared that to allow the child the freedom of her own childish fancies was the wisest plan; that she was sensitive; to which Mrs. Homean would reply that she should be left alone to indulge her own desires as far as was reasonable.

During the latter part of September, there were a series of beautiful cloudless days and calm, serene moonlight nights. The intense summer heat had moderated very much, but the sweet flowers had not yet disappeared, and the sweet-voiced birds lingered among the trees and vines in great coveys as if planning for their annual excursion south when winter at last came. It was the pause that always seems to intervene between summer and autumn, before any change takes place. The hand of nature had ceased to work, as it were,

and all nature seemed to lull in peaceful repose during the lapse of quietude and idleness.

One of these quiet, sunny days, in the calm afternoon, Mamie chose to take a stroll down the river and gather flowers. When she had kissed her foster-mother, she started away. Once on her way she looked back and threw a kiss at Mrs. Homean, who was sitting in a large rocking-chair on the porch.

"Good-by, mamma!" she exclaimed with a laugh. "I may not come back soon."

"Of course I am very much afraid my little girl will stay away," and Mrs. Homean laughed as she said these words.

Mamie bounded away on her way in search of her favorite pansies, waving her petty white bonnet at Mr. Homean, who was at work in the garden.

Once she looked back before disappearing and saw Mr. and Mrs. Homean sitting close together. A tender touch of love stirred fervently in her pure heart for them. She thought seriously of her words, "Good-by," which she had expressed to Mrs. Homean jestingly. Placing her small hand over her little heart, she sighed heavily and passed on. She had not walked very far past the shop when a carriage came dashing up the road. It stopped just as she meant to pass, and a voice, gruff and impatient, exclaimed:

"Ho, there, kid!"

Whereupon the child stopped.

"Where is Mr. and Mrs. Homean?" asked the gruff voice again.

"They are at home, sir."

"Is any one else there?"

"No."

"Drive on!" he commanded with a laugh, and the carriage drove toward Mr. Homean's house, leaving Mamie with a puzzled expression on her face. Little did she know of what would occur during the next hour, while she would be absent. She stood there for only a moment, then banishing from her mind every serious thought about the mysterious carriage, she bounded off into the woods with childish gayety.

The shadows that always gather at twilight now gathered in the forest and enveloped the faraway chain of mountains in their mystic maze. As she plunged deeper into the forest she began to sing in order to drive away the strange, lonely sensation that falls upon one at the approach of darkness. The echoes rang out a weird, hollow-like chorus upon the evening stillness. She would pause now and then to listen to the receding echoes; then, when the deep silence had hushed them forever, she would resume her song.

At last she had roamed over a large portion of the river valley and had gathered a large, pretty bunch of flowers; then she started home. She sang lowly and sweetly along the way. As she approached the house, merrily singing her twilight song, the moon rose full and round and cast its soft effulgence over the porch where she had last seen Mrs. Homean.

"They have retired very early, surely," she thought in whisper, then with an innocent, childish smile, continued: "But never mind, I will surprise them with a pretty bouquet apiece!"

She opened the gate and passed in, but as she was about to ascend the steps, she drew back suddenly and threw up her hands in astonishment. There before her on the floor lay the form of Mrs. Homean, still as death. The child leaned forward eagerly and called almost in a whisper:

"Mamma, dear, why are you sleeping out here on the floor?"

She received no answer, and moving a little closer, she put her hand upon the shoulder of the prostrate woman, and shaking her, called a little louder:

"Wake up, mamma, it is growing late, and it is chilly out here."

Still there was no answer and the child, slightly alarmed, stooped, and, placing her hand upon the woman's face and looking closely into her eyes, started back in terror The glassy eyes stared at her through the moonlight; the white face was cold; and the stiff fingers clutched a broken knife. She was dead! Mamie fell upon her knees and touched her lips to the cold, white face and grasped the cold, blood-stained hands.

"Mamma! Wake up! Oh, you are so cold and stiff. O, Mamma! You have gone to sleep forever! O, my God! My God!"

The child screamed despairingly; the terrible cry rent the still night air and reverberated with a shriek from the resonant forest. For hours she sat mute as a grim spectre in the dreary moonlight, with her hands clasped before her and with her eyes fixed with a hard, stony gaze upon the dead woman on the floor. No tears bedimmed the eyes; the shock was too terrible. The flowers that

she had gathered had fallen upon the floor; and, as she occasionally glanced down upon them and thought of the momentary joy she had anticipated in giving them to her kind friends, a bitter, mocking smile darkened in her eyes and over her brow and curled her petulant lips. She looked at them with disdain, and reproached them bitterly, for it seemed that they had proven false at this hour of need. At other times they had been her truest friends and had always been a source of great joy to her; but now they seemed to have deserted her.

She thought of her earthly loss, but her heart could not grasp the thought of death. It puzzled her. It was this strange death that had robbed her of her precious foster-mother. No more could she claim the warm, pitying love of that precious mother. God had always loved her; but she had always cherished that love because it came through the heart of that woman on the floor.

She at last rose and walked through the corridor in search of Mr. Homean. She searched everywhere, but nowhere could he be found. She called loudly several times, but no voice answered her call. Her voice sounded through the silent rooms with startling echoes. The child felt a cold chill creep over her body, and she shuddered as she retraced her way back to the place where she had been keeping vigil over the dead. There she took her seat again and waited and watched through all that dreary night of agony!

CHAPTER IV.

At last the dreary night passed; and a glorious morning was dawning over the eastern hills, plains and woodlands. The songs of the happy birds mingled with the breezes; and ten thousand times ten thousand sunbeams streamed over the tranquil world. Everything seemed to ignore the tragedy of death hovering over the Homean mansion. But Mamie sat still as a statue, mute and desolate, while the sunshine threw a flood of light over the porch where she sat. All the night long she had been thinking and reasoning. Although the shock was terrible, she yet retained her reason. Her meditations had terminated in the conclusion that all the world, and even God, had turned away from her, leaving her friendless, hopeless and utterly desolate. Why should she take her troubles to God, since He had cursed her innocency? Why should she pray at all, since He had taken away from her all that she had in this world? All the pure, childish love seemed to be dying in her wounded, benumbed heart. A bitter rebellion was hardening her heart when she remembered that God had allowed her to taste the cup of joy one minute when she contemplated the pretty plan of surprising her friends with the

pretty flowers, then had the next minute hurled His eternal curse of terrible disappointment and still more awful grief upon her, and then had turned bitterly away. She had anticipated a glorious future, when she would be able to accomplish a great work, and to repay Mr. and Mrs. Homean for their love and kindness in educating her and in giving her a happy home; but now to her the world was desolate and life empty and blank. The future contained not a ray of hope for her. In her heart every noble aspiration had died, and ambition was no more. She might have cried out for the house to fall upon her and hide her from existence; for she was friendless, homeless and ruined forever!

While she was sitting there, a constant vigil, watching the cold, stiff form of the dead, she did not see the approaching form of Alton Tolliver as he quietly opened the gate and came up the path. Her fixed gaze upon the dead woman, and her state of deepest oblivion, rendered her absolutely listless and indifferent to everything. When Alton touched her and spoke, she only lifted her sad, feverish eyes to look blankly at him. It was several minutes before he managed to arouse her; then she only sighed, and a deep moan of anguish issued from her trembling lips. There was an appealing look in her eyes. She extended her hands toward him as she rose, hopelessly resigned to fate, and seeking in almost utter despair some help, some consolation, some alleviation of her misery and distress. He took her in his arms and strained her to his heart, while his tears fell thick and fast over her pale, sad face.

His heart ached for her, and yet the joy of holding her in his arms was the most supreme felicity that he had ever had or would ever have again. He felt that it might be the last time, so he held her in his strong embrace for several minutes, then put her from him. He looked down upon the cold, prostrate form upon the floor, and a fiendish frown darkened his brow and eyes, and he clenched his fingers in a kind of frenzy. At last Mamie burst into violent weeping, and, falling upon her knees, she bowed over her dead foster-mother.

"O God, what have I done so wicked, so callous, to incur Thy wrath upon me? I have loved and served Thee as only a poor, orphan girl can; and oh, why hast Thou cursed instead of blessed me?"

The words went up with a bitter wailing cry of deepest anguish. Alton turned away to hide the bitter, scowling visage that writhed upon his face, and his body shook with a quick shudder caused by a sudden horror of conscience; then he turned to Mamie, and lifting her from the floor, said:

"You must come away, Mamie. I shall take you to my home in Nashville. In the meantime I will notify the neighbors of Mrs. Homean's death."

He started on, supporting the child upon his arm; but she made some efforts to turn back, crying:

"Oh, I can never leave her!"

But he led her on to his buggy and lifted her into it, then drove away; and as he passed a neigh-

bor's house, he informed them of the death of Mrs. Homean. He carried Mamie on to his home in Nashville.

The neighbors reverently buried the body of Mrs. Homean in the cemetery near Nashville. Mamie was allowed to attend the funeral, but so terrible was the grief that had overcome her that she was unconscious for weeks afterward. But finally she recovered from all this, and endeavored as best she could to be resigned to the sad lot that had fallen to her. But her grief lingered with her day after day; and a fixed, pensive look overshadowed her beautiful face, and very often tears could be seen in her eyes and a pitiful moan would flit across her lips.

She never went back to the old home, though, with a pained heart, she often thought of it, and fancied its desolate, gloomy loveliness. She fancied that she could see the dilapidated fences and the decaying shop. Mr. Homean had mysteriously disappeared, and all was left to go to ruin. She had lost her beautiful albatross, and she was still more friendless. Alton was her constant companion, and he tried in his peculiar way to make her happy; but somehow there was a "vacancy" in her heart that he could never fill. She longed for a sweeter consolation and for a more trusting companionship. Mrs. Tolliver was good and kind to her, but there was too much vanity about her. Mamie had instinctively read the character of Mrs. Tolliver to be haughty and ambitious. Mrs. Tolliver was sufficiently kind, but not altogether a congenial, warm-hearted companion.

Mrs. Tolliver was, indeed, one of those "high-minded" women whose credulity led her to believe that Mamie was, and never could be more than, a common, coarse country girl; and therefore never became as intimate with the child as she would have with what she would have called a more refined charge. She failed to notice the noble traits of the child.

Mamie tried to conceal her aversion for society. She always managed, if she could, to remain at home as much as possible. She preferred the company of books to all worldly amusements, and she loved the society of flowers and birds better than the cruel, treacherous tyranny of merciless humanity.

It was a pretty, bright day in January, and Mamie was sitting in her little room before the fire, reading "Ben Hur." She had finished a chapter, and had closed the book listlessly, and begun thinking over her eventful, unfortunate life. She felt lonely and friendless. She had no mother to love her, no home she could call her own, no friend that she could trust. As she sat there, thinking of her hard lot, tears began to steal slowly through the closed eyelids and to trickle down over her wan cheeks. She wept for an hour, and at last her poor heart felt relief. She looked out upon the sunshine that fell upon the smooth front yard and over the barren trees like a golden mantle. It looked pleasant out there, but she shivered as the north wind would whistle around the house. Just so it had been when the sunshine of happiness had brooded over the innocent soul; ere it began to cherish and appreciate the

seemingly surrounding felicities, the chilling blasts of cruel society and sneering criticism were chilling that soul and making desolate and bleak that poor heart.

As she casually looked out upon the effulgent scene, she quickly caught sight of two gentlemen coming hurriedly up the street. They were wrapped to the tips of their ears in snug overcoats. She knew that one of them was Alton Tolliver, but she could not readily recognize the other gentleman. Something, too, seemed to recall to her his apparently familiar walk; but she shook her head dubiously, sayiing, "No, it cannot be he."

They disappeared around the corner of the block, and she turned her face toward the grate with a heavy sigh. She pressed her fingers to her eyes, and fell into meditation again.

But she was soon again aroused, this time by the tramp of feet and the clatter of voices in the corridor. She opened her big, brown eyes in speechless wonder, and listened with an anxious expression on her countenance. The voices were familiar. The voice that sounded in her ears with such sweet, familiar tones was the voice of Leland Burnett. For one brief moment, she felt the brief felicity of a sweet anticipation; but her heart soon sank with humility when she thought of how he would look upon her with a kind of necessary contempt when he knew of her dependence and embarrassing circumstances. She dreaded the magnetic scrutiny of his fine eyes. She determined not to endure his reproachful gaze. She was poor, but she was proud and defiant.

As she sat there, her brain was in a whirl with rapidly-forming resolutions; and quickly there had matured in her mind a very rigid determination to escape from that place before he could see her, and to depart to some place where she would never be heard of again. She heard the gentlemen go into the reception-room and take their seats before the fire. It would perhaps be late in the afternoon before he would meet her, therefore she would have plenty of time to make her escape.

But an intense longing to see his handsome face seized her. She would see him once before she went away. She rose from her chair and glided noiselessly across the room and out through the corridor, and paused just behind a silken drapery and listened. She could hear his voice, and with only a step or two she could put her hand upon him. She looked through the parted draperies at his handsome figure, and the momentary bliss which always tantalizes the hungry heart under such circumstances took possession of her. Then, when she realized that perhaps this was the last time she should ever see him, she clasped her little hands before her and wrung them in terrible anguish, while the hot, bitter tears flowed from her beautiful eyes in unutterable agony. A tremor passed her beautiful lips, and almost inaudibly came the words from her trembling lips:

"O my God! Sustain me!"

Her heart was stubborn and sullen, while her reason said that it was best to go away. After a moment's struggle with her passionate heart, she

turned abruptly away and hurried back to her room.

Hurriedly putting on her winter wraps, and veiling her face from the bitter winds, she procured her little money-purse, which contained a few bills and some pieces of silver, and was ready to go. But she sat down and waited a while longer; why? Ah, who can answer more correctly than to say that it was the obstinacy of the heart which refused to give up its idol? She knelt by her chair and prayed; then, rising with that stern expression on her pale face, she drew on her gloves and proceeded to make her escape.

She passed out through the large hall unnoticed, on into the front yard, and out into the street. The sun had set, and a gray twilight had settled upon the smoky city.

She stood for a moment, looking up and down the street as a lost child would do. Suddenly she thought of a book which she had carelessly left in the dining-room window, and she hurried back around the house to get it. On her way she suddenly came upon Burnett. She drew back at the sight of him. He looked down upon her, and gazed as if he did not at once recognize her. Then a surprised smile parted his lips and sparkled in his eyes as he sprang at her and caught her in his arms.

"Why, Mamie, can it be you? Oh, how beautiful you have grown!"

He put her from him a little, and regarded her as one in sweet surprise.

"Yes," he said gently, "you are more beautiful

than you ever were. But why are you here? Why aren't you at home?"

"I have no home," she replied sadly.

"But where are Mr. and Mrs. Homean?"

"Mrs. Homean is dead, and Mr. Homean may be dead; I do not know. I have not seen or heard of him in two years. I am, indeed, a lonely orphan girl now. I have no one to love, no one to love."

"O Mamie, what are you telling me? Can it all be true? Tell me all!"

He leaned against the house, and looked into Mamie's face appealingly, anxiously, while she told him briefly all that had occurred during the past two years; and his strong body shook with convulsive sobs while he listened to her sad story. Alton had withheld the news from him for some reason, he knew not why. He had not been informed even of Mamie's presence here. He had anticipated a happy meeting at the Homean mansion after he had made Alton a short visit. But now his hopes and plans were shattered. Somehow he could not become fully reconciled to the fact. He could not realize that this beautiful, happy home he loved had been deserted, and that those whom he had almost worshipped, had perished so mysteriously. He wept for some time, then pressing a sympathetic kiss upon Mamie's upturned face, he bade her go into the house, with the usual request of God to bless her. She started away, and he noticed her strange dress and called her back.

"Where were you going?" he asked.

"Why did you ask?" and she blushed.

"You have on your traveling dress. Surely you are not going away?"

"Yes."

"But why? Oh, how could you leave me so cruelly? I am so sad now."

He caught her little hand, and drew her close to him. She looked up into his face steadily, and said frankly:

"Leland, I am a poor, penniless orphan upon the mercies of these kind people. I am not recognized because I am poor and helpless; and, of course, as you came here as a guest of theirs, it would be too painful to have the embarrassment of your reproachful, scorning eyes looking down upon me. I was too proud to succumb to such humiliation, so I am going away. I can't expect you to regard me as your equal, knowing my circumstances."

"Hush, hush! You shall not talk to me in that way. I regard you with higher esteem now than ever. You have been shamefully humiliated. No one has had sense enough to appreciate your true social qualities and your capacities. But, thank God, your social standing shall be restored. I will defend you. I am able. Will you stay?"

She hesitated a moment, looking away toward the shadows of the winter evening, which were gathering over the great city, and a faint smile stole into her sad, tearful eyes.

"I am waiting, Mamie, to hear your answer; will you stay and trust all to me?"

She looked up into his face with that look of childish confidence, and answered:

"Yes, Leland, I will stay. You are so kind and noble; I can trust *you.*"

"God bless you, child, that is a grand resolution. Now go back to your room and abandon your purpose to leave."

He pressed her hand tightly, and turned away. She watched him till he disappeared down the street, then went into the house. When she had seated herself before the fire, she tried to think of the meeting. How strange it seemed that he was so interested in her. She debated in her mind whether she should have gone on or should have stayed as she had done. She felt so dejected, so insignificant, so humiliated. Perhaps his efforts to sustain her dignity and birth would be futile; then she would wake up and find herself in a maze of wild, whirling fatuity in which she would find all friendship a mockery, love a curse and a sorrow, and "life but an empty dream." The child had at last begun to learn the world as it was and not merely as it seemed.

That evening, when they all entered the dining-room to partake of the evening repast, Burnett and Mamie were formally introduced, which form they observed with stiff bows. A hearty supper was disposed of, while Burnett and Mr. Tolliver engaged in a lively discussion of Oriental travels. Mamie did not look up or engage in the conversation.

That night Mamie could not sleep. She had carefully recalled every event of her sad life. Her life had been one of sorrow, yet she could see that the mercies of God had preserved her from many a catastrophe and had made life much less

painful than it otherwise would have been. She was now fourteen years of age, and was just blooming into sweet girlhood; but in all the world she had no friend to appreciate that loveliness or to note the excellences of her character, save that true friend, Leland Burnett; and should he prove false, she would be most miserable indeed.

After that night, Mamie began to notice unmistakable attention being paid to her on the part of Alton Tolliver. It was plain that he loved her.

As time passed on, others began to pay court to her. At last she was sought by every fashionable lady in West Nashville, and was regarded by them as a most accomplished girl. She, however, avoided their society as much as she could, for she did not always entertain full confidence in them. Now and then she observed, with horror and disgust, the most wicked dissimulations of her sex. She dreaded society. There was something offensive and repulsive in its treachery. But she was quick to observe the purer qualities in social life, and to these she clung and trusted most fully.

There is in society, as well as in a great many other things, some good. Society is not altogether corrupt; yet it is tainted and polluted.

Leland Burnett resided at the Tulane Hotel, where he devoted all his time to his theological studies. He made Mamie a visit every week, to supply all her needs and to show his special interest in her welfare. Being orphans, their sympathies were mutual, and day after day their attachment grew stronger.

Alton Tolliver was jealously observant of this, but he manifested no irritation or anxiety. He had already made his resolutions, and would rigidly execute his plans. He would win the beautiful child, Mamie, at all cost—even to the limitless bounds of a tragedy. So he calmly awaited his opportunity.

There are those in existence, in whose veins still run the blood of blood-thirsty Jugurtha. They are the would-be worshippers of Nemesis; and they wreak their vengeance upon those whom they hate, in every way possible and most cruel. They are the anarchists of all human happiness, the assassins of love, the lurking, fiendish devils hiding in ambuscade along the highways of life, and seeking to spring upon some tender life and to crush it to death in their maddened rage. They crawl and hiss in every abode of happiness; and strike their deadly fangs of cruelty into the youthful heart, to there inject the poison of death, then leave it to suffer and to die. That is why God's angels watch with eternal vigilance over His faithful servants while they labor in His vineyard or abide in the shadow of His wing.

CHAPTER V.

No event of extraordinary importance occurred during the lapse of two years. By this time Mamie Homean had developed into a beautiful girl of seventeen. Since she had had the presence of Leland Burnett and his help in the struggles of life, she had been relieved of a great portion of her sadness and humility. She still cherished that tender affection for Leland that she had almost feared was wrong. But she felt that there was nothing sweeter than love, and nothing stronger, for it was sung by Solomon, who said that it is stronger than death. To her there was nothing on earth or in heaven fuller or sweeter or better. But she must keep it a sacred secret. It would never do for Leland to know that she loved him. He would laugh her to scorn.

Thus she went on day after day; but little did she know that Leland Burnett could read her childish heart in the eyes that betrayed her love when she looked into his.

Apparently Alton Tolliver was Leland's best friend. They were members of the same club; they fished and hunted together; and they traveled a great deal together. One night they were walking down North Market Street, and were engaged in an earnest conversation,

"I saw you at the McKendree last night," said Burnett. "How did you like the sermon?"

"I did not know much about what he said. The thoughts that he presented were all right, I suppose, but they were unfounded. They were beautiful thoughts, but they were mere fancies snatched from the mystic realm of a flaunting idealism—they were 'fair but false.'"

"Indeed, they were not!" corrected Burnett. "It is certainly unreasonable that the human mind could produce such grand, sublime thoughts unless inspired by the divinity of God."

"Are you so credulous, Leland, as to believe that there is a God?"

"I know that there is an Omnipotent Power."

"My dear Leland, can you produce proof sufficient to duly authenticate your knowledge that there is a God?"

"I do not propose a logical discussion of the subject. I know it from a personal experience. A spiritual touch of His holiness tells me that He exists. Can you truthfully say that there is no God?"

"I admit that there is a first cause which created and rules all times, existence and creation; but I have no right to call that cause God, or to attribute to Him the pious epithet that He or it is 'good and holy.'"

"Well, it is not within the limited capacity of my limited knowledge to explain all this. Truth and Justice will prevail, Alton, and I know that it is only a wise thing for sensible persons to be submissive and adherent to those who have a more perfect knowledge than we. You must ad-

mit that mankind generally profess faith in Christ."

By this time they had reached Cherry Street, where they parted company, Alton turning into a saloon and Leland boarding a street car for the hotel.

It is sad, indeed, when there exists such diversity of opinions between two intimate friends on such vital, such sacred questions. Leland Burnett was filled with true religious faith in his God, while Alton Tolliver was filled with the infectious, poisonous skepticism of *modren infidelity!*

Often, when the conscience feels the sting of guilt and shudders at the visage of its crime, it seeks a relief in infidelic proclivities. Infidelity is the phantom of refuge after which only the cowards flee, hoping to reach a safety where an outraged Jehovah cannot hurl His wrath against them. But, ah, there is no refuge so secure that eternal Justice cannot enter there; no safe retreat for the trembling, cowardly soul, where it may evade the judgment call of God. The great judgment is certain to come; the will of God is certainly upon the land; and eternal Justice will prevail! "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess" that Jesus Christ is Lord; and this confession shall come from the infidel as well.

Burnett called at the home of Mrs. Tolliver in due time, on a beautiful spring afternoon. Mamie had been looking for him, and was waiting for him to come and take her out driving. She watched his carriage through the window till it stopped at the gate. There was something in his appearance and manner that made her think

of the old days at the happy home. He was the same gentle, kind-hearted boy. He had sent her so frequently new books and baskets of flowers, that she could not regard him but with the tenderest affections.

As they drove along the street and entered Broad Street, their Cupid-wounded hearts filled with overflowing love; and Burnett turned very often to look at the sweet, pensive face of his companion. He saw, with a pleasant thrill in his heart, that when his earnest eyes looked into hers, a faint blush enlivened her fair cheeks; and he leaned his face very near hers while he talked to her with that charming, irresistible eloquence which love always inspires in the heart of a suitor. Mamie was in high spirits. The old days of her early girlhood at her old home came back to her with natural feelings of joy. She laughed gaily, and a radiant smile glowed upon her countenance.

The carriage dashed on up the street, and in course of time they were driving across the bridge toward Edgefield. The sun sank, and the great city was lighted up with electricity before Burnett turned in a homeward course. Passing over the bridge, Mamie looked down into the deep water at the dancing reflections on its surface, and her thoughts traveled back swiftly to that memorable evening when she prayed by the little spring; when Leland heard that prayer and clasped her to his bosom, crying passionately, "Mamie, I love you; may God give you to me in heaven!" These sad but sweet memories touched her tender heart, and large, clear tears stood

charmingly in her beautiful brown eyes, and a low moan escaped her lips. Burnett looked at her quickly and said in a tone which rang out like a melody of tenderest love in her ears: "My darling, why are you crying?"

He laid his hand on hers, and his eyes met her sorrowful gaze. She withdrew her hands and hid her face in them, and answered almost inaudibly:

"I cannot tell you, Leland. I sometimes think I am weak and foolish."

"Mamie!" he said, suddenly, "do you know how beautiful you are—how lovely?"

She did not answer, but pressed her face against the lining of the carriage to hide the sweet flush that glowed on her cheeks like the pale tint of a wild rose. He leaned close to her and took her little hand in his.

"Mamie! Mamie!" he whispered. "I love you, my darling, I love you!"

She trembled in his presence, and strove to release her little hand, but he pressed it more tightly. His heart was wild with the enthusiastic rapture of his wonderful passion,—the sky turned to a vast sea of glittering jewels, and on its beauty shone the semblance of love. The breezes whispered love to them—every sound, every movement was a luxury of love to them; there was nothing in the great world save love, love, love! It beat strongly through his body, and the telepathic touch thrilled to Mamie, and she would fain have acknowledged it.

"Listen, Mamie," and his warm breath touched her cheek. "Sweetheart, my love, if you are not offended—kiss me, and I will know."

There was a quick rustle of lace about her sleeves, and she put up a little hand to enjoin silence. For a moment the love-lit eyes fell full and sweet upon his face, and there was a brief silence. This was only a moment of hesitation, then she lifted his hand, and he felt a quick, soft touch upon it,—a touch so sweet that for one rapturous moment he gazed at her in speechless surprise and joy, and saw her pure, radiant face and soft brown eyes bent close, close,—ah, so close to him! He remembered nothing save that a sea of love had swallowed them up.

"Do you love me, Mamie?" he murmured slowly, with a strange rapture in his voice. "I have always hoped, Mamie, that you loved me—darling, tell me that you love me."

A new beauty drifted over her countenance, and her eyes began to emit the glory of a rapidly burning passion.

"I need not tell you, Leland, that I love you," she said, with a low ring of rapture in her soft voice. "Ah, you know that I have loved you—always."

"O Mamie, my darling! God of heaven, make me worthy of you!"

"Hush, hush!" she whispered. "That is all nonsense. Worthy? Why, I humbly look up to you. Now isn't that the way to put it?"

He did not say, but looked at her with eyes full of ardent, passionate love, mingled with wonder and a pleasant, sweet surprise. Some minutes elapsed before either of them spoke. The horses were walking slowly; carriages dashed by them; and the din of early twilight stirring among the

city populace was constant; but they saw and heard none of it. At last Mr. Burnett ventured to speak:

"Did you know, darling, that love is the acme of human happiness; that it is the only lasting thing in creation?"

"Yes," she whispered, so low that it was like the stray chant of a hidden fairy. "I know that love is stronger than death. It is worth dying for that we may have it again more fully than ever. Ah, love is the fairest conception of Eternity!"

Leland looked fondly into he rapture-lit face, thinking, with great inspiration, of the words of Dante Rossetti:

"Could you not drink her gaze like wine?
Yet in its splendor swoon
Into a silence languidly,
As a tune into a tune?"

"Mamie," he said softly, " it would be sweet to hear you say that you love me, again?"

She smiled dreamily as she looked into his face.

"Ah, Leland, you have been told that I love you by the language of my eyes, and that language is stronger than my words." She sighed a little, paused a brief interval, then continued, "I cannot tell you just how I feel, but, ah, how dreadful——"

"What is dreadful, darling?"

She sighed deeply. "To think that I am no more queen of nature. Ah, how the little birds loved me and trusted me; how the sweet flowers

smiled at me when I fondled and caressed them; how the breezes whispered love in my ears all the day long. All nature was my realm of sovereignty, but now I have at last fallen prostrate at the feet of a king greater than I, and that king is Love,—that Love is you!"

Her sweet voice quivered with emotion. She continued:

"But, oh! what a luxury to indulge in the thought that I am worshipping at the shrine of tha noble king! It isn't so terrible, after all, yet it is strange, for I hear the mad beating of your heart clamoring for its idol of worship,—poor boy!"

By this time they had reached the home of Mrs. Tolliver. Leland assisted her from the carriage and escorted her to the doorstep, then stopped and looked at her.

"Our present felicity seems too great for us to destroy it now. This, indeed, has been the happiest evening of my life."

"Thanks," she replied, "but we are not saying farewell, you know."

Leland laughed and caught her hand. The street light fell full upon their faces, and she recognized his laugh with a sweet smile.

"Take off your hat a moment," he said. "Now, let me adorn your person a little more," and he unwrapped a golden locket and chain from its silk paper wrapper and suspended it about her neck. It sparkled like a rival against the beautiful necklace she had always worn, and flashed among the laces on her bosom.

"This," he continued, gently, "is yours hence-

forth, as a token of my affection for you. One thing you must promise me, however, and that is that you will never open it to ascertain its contents until I tell you that you can open it. This is not a hard, strange request; it is only a matter of necessity."

"Thank you, Leland," she said softly, as she laid the jewel in her hand and looked at it, smiling as she did so. "You can trust me."

"Trust you?" he asked half to himself. "Yes, forever!"

Then he caught her hand, kissed it, and turned away, saying good-by as he went. But just then Alton met him. He glanced from Leland to Mamie and smiled. But we know that behind a smile there sometimes lurks a fiendish visage. He stepped forward with that usual uneasy, quick step and haughty air, and, lifting his hat, he bowed courteously.

"Good evening to you both. Allow me to congratulate you as the modern lovers of a modern Pompeii, Glaucus and Ione."

He laughed and shook Leland's hand, then Leland turned away, and was soon out of sight. Alton and Mamie repaired to their respective apartments, and soon absolute silence reigned in the house.

To-night, as Mamie lay awake, she asked herself why she shivered, why she could not sleep, and almost unconsciously she answered herself by asking herself another strange question:

"Tell me, O my heart, why do you think so tenderly now of my mother?"

In her wakeful restlessness she rose, went to the

window, knelt by it, and folded her arms upon the sill, while she looked far out over the great city. She fancied she still heard the ardent beating of the heart of him whom she loved so dearly. The music of his voice still rang in her ears. Tears filled and overflowed her eyes, falling warmly on her folded hands.

"'Mamie! Mamie! My darling, I love you, my darling! I love you!'" she said in a plaintive tone. Her words startled her, and she rose, lowered the window and the shade as if some passing fairy might hear her words.

That night was a dream of love. But the future she dreamed was crossed by shadows, and she saw through the shattered scenes of her dream the bleeding heart of Alton Tolliver slowly dying under the cruel martydom of insatiable love. She pitied him.

During the following months Alton Tolliver seemed to take a deep interest in Leland Burnett. Frequently he visited him in his room and spent hours of the evening talking with him. Their taste for study was parallel. There was no care, no trouble, no secret of Leland's that he would not confide to his friend, Alton. He even laid before him the secret of his wonderful love for Mamie. Like David and Jonathan, their affections were united in a bond that might be stronger than death. Leland was much more wealthy than Alton, and it was his greatest pleasure to lavish upon him his fortune in extreme extravagance. In every bit of happiness which Leland had, Alton shared equally. There was no dream or hope that he did not pour into

the sympathizing ear of his friend. He hoped and prayed and pleaded with all his soul that Alton might be rescued from the poisonous, treacherous coil of the serpent of Infidelity which was poisoning gradually his youthful soul; and he fancied that faith that was strong enough to remove mountains was his, and that some day he would rejoice to see his dear friend in the arms of salvation. Alton recognized all this with seeming pleasure, and showed his appreciation by frequenting his society at the hotel, at the club, and by going with him to church.

As Leland made frequent visits to see Mamie, their affections continued to grow stronger rapidly. They gave to each other their hearts, their lives, and as completely as ever love was given for love. Their love was that pure love, "the love of heaven's own making." But there is no dream of life so sweet that it has no ending. The bitter awakening is sure to come, with its terrible disappointments.

Leland had lingered near his beautiful one long enough. The sacred duties of his calling summoned him away to Washington, and the time had arrived when he must go there. He had already made his parting visit to Mamie, and the following day he would start away. And as he was making preparations to go, he began to think about the long time he would be absent from his darling, and an intense longing to see her seized him. He wanted to see her once more. Besides, he had something to say to her. He wrote a little note, requesting her to meet him at a quiet little place in the suburbs of the city that

evening. When Mamie read it she hesitated. Mrs. Tolliver had retired early before it was yet dark, and Alton had gone out to revel with some evil associates, and no one would observe her absence for a little while. So she veiled her face and drew a shawl about her shoulders and quietly left the house.

As the street car stopped for the passage of another, she boarded it. It was not long carrying her near the appointed spot. She stepped from the car and walked down the narrow path that led to the river bank where she was to meet him. The dew had fallen a little, and it showered from the grass and flowers in crystal drops upon her dainty slippered feet as she brushed by them. Before she reached him, she saw Leland's half-bent form darken against .the. watery mirror. How could she ever meet him? When she reached him, her suffering heart gave way, and she fell upon her knees at his feet, crying:

"O, Leland! This is wrong!"

"Yes," he admitted, "it is wrong, but let us try to think that it is a pleasant romance, and that whatever is sweet is neither good nor bad."

"But I can't!" was her only reply, and she looked blankly into his strangely brilliant eyes.

"Mamie! My darling! My love!" he began, passionately, "I could not quiet my desire, my intense longing to see you once more. I have something to tell you, or at least a request to make. When Mr. Homean entrusted to me your share of the legacy, he imposed a great responsibility upon me. Of course, legally, you cannot claim it until you reach the proper age, but here

is a check calling for the amount of your legacy, which I bequeath to you from my own earnings and possessions. Take it without a word of refusal."

She took it without a word, and was astonished, but something in his flashing, brilliant eyes told her that it would not do to hesitate. She took it from his extended hand.

He took her hands and held them tightly, and looked into her eyes with a world of love beaming in his own.

"Now, darling, let me hear you say once more that you love me," he said, very tenderly. "It is a luxury to hear you say that. I am listening, my sweet."

"Leland, I love you!" she said, with a low, sweet melody in her voice. He ventured to kiss her lips, then released her hands.

"I am glad. To hear you say you love me is richer than a stray melody from heaven. Oh, if I could hear it always—always—always."

He spoke in an ardent whisper of passion.

"Now, I must say good-by again," he said. She etxended her little jeweled hand to him, and he grasped it in silence for a moment, then mournfully they said:

"Good-by."

CHAPTER VI.

In one of those magnificent, palatial houses that give Washington its marvelous beauty and make the grandeur of our Capital almost peerless as a city of luxury, stood Leland Burnett a few days after his departure from Nashville. His reception into Mr. Dillion's beautiful home was indeed a cordial one, and he was soon familiar with the character and customs of the family with whom he had chosen to reside. He had had some little acquaintance with Mr. Dillion a few years before; and knowing him to be a kind man, he preferred living with him to lodging at a hotel. In addition, Mr. Dillion was an influential member of the society to which he belonged, and for which he was to preach.

The family consisted of Mr and Mrs. Dillion and their little seven-year-old daughter, Lilian. Mrs. Dillion was one of those good-natured, intelligent, lovable characters that always make home a palace of peace, an emblem of heaven. But she was very much devoted to society, and gave much of her time and attention to the demands of social ethics which she should have devoted to the care and attention and training of her beautiful little daughter and to making her

hearthstone a happy resort for Mr. Dillion during his leisure hours. She was a middle-aged woman of fine bearing, and she still retained the handsomeness and gaiety of youth. She was ambitious, yet, with all this pride and dignity, she possessed a personality that won every heart that came within the power of her refining influence and winning disposition.

Lilian was of gentle and meek disposition; a child whose sweetness and loveliness was marked by the purity of her manner and her docility. She loved books, and displayed a taste for literature at an early age. She loved kind, gentle playmates, and detested all rudeness and ill-temper.

Mr. Dillion was a man of rare ability in business. He was a man of considerable wealth—man of millions—yet he was noble and generous-hearted, and donated large sums for the building of churches and the founding of libraries and of schools, and for the support of the poor and suffering of our race. He was a philanthropist.

Burnett was given a room beautifully furnished, where from his window he could look out upon the Capitol building. He was furnished with a well-supplied library, and spent the greater part of his time in his study, poring over difficult problems of Oriental geological discoveries and intricate translations of recent archeological find. Here he wrote articles as contributions to a noted religious periodical, which had secured his name among its able contributors. His insatiable desire for erudition and especially theological lore urged him to pursue with eagerness the curriculum most pertaining to his great work.

One day he was reading a paper, and had just completed an article. Tossing it upon his desk, he went out into the fresh air to exercise. Just as he started down the street he was joined by Mr. Mathes, a gentleman whom he had met on his way to Washington. He carried under his arm a Greek New Testament, and when he joined Mr. Burnett he said:

"What do you think? I have conceived a new idea which is a proof within itself."

"Then I'll be pleased to learn the new idea. Let me hear it."

"Well, sir, I have arrived at the conclusion that not all souls are immortal. There is no future habitation for some spirits that now inhabit the frail body of man. Now, there; don't look so shocked! I haven't satisfied my relentless ambition yet, whatever I may say as I proceed. The argument supporting what I have said is very plain, but I will not enter into an explanation, for my theory is true."

Leland opened his mouth to speak, but Mr. Mathes enjoined silence with a flourish of his hand.

"Spare yourself, Mr. Burnett, I have been following the bent of your mind. I know you distrust me, but bear with me just a little."

"I meant to declare your theory false, no matter what the form of your argument may be."

"Have you studied the Latin and Greek classics?" asked Mr. Mathes, as if Leland had not spoken.

"I have a very good knowledge of the classics, yes, sir."

"Do you read the Bible?"

"I do, extensively."

"Then, have you the New Testament in the Greek translation?"

"I have, and I find it a great help; it is very plain."

"Perhaps it has been too plain for me," said Mr. Mathes, somewhat to himself. "I believe there is a final redemption beyond the grave where the soul that is doomed to eternal hell can obtain forgiveness and made pure for the courts of heaven. Then the soul can 'pass from death into life.'"

"There is a hell," said Leland with emphasis, "and the poor, unfortunate soul that hurls itself therein can never, never return. Such theories are verging upon skepticism, Mr. Mathes. No theological doctrine will contain such a dangerous theory. I am sure you are no theologian, or you would have never entertained such a dangerous thought."

"But, my friend, there can be found certain portions of the Bible which demonstrate my theories."

"Spare yourself; conversely, I can find portions which seemingly are to me altogether skeptical; while there are other portions which the feeble, limited intellect of man cannot discern."

"Oh, you are unfair!" said Mr. Mathes, hotly. "You have given me no chance to explain myself."

Just then they were passing a magnificent saloon, through the doorway of which streamed rapturous strains of music played by a skilled band.

Mr. Mathes stopped short, and listened with a smile.

"I suggest, Mr. Burnett, that we go in and listen and take a sip at the bar."

"No, no, Mr. Mathes; I shall go on. I don't think your suggestion is a good one."

"Pshaw! We need not tarry long. Be generous to an old acquaintance just for this once."

"I shall not go, Mr. Mathes. If I must be candid, I do not drink any intoxicating liquors."

"Well! A youthful prohibitionist!" and Mr. Mathes laughed derisively. "A chap afraid of hell because of the consequences. Though it is very well to be consistent enough to seem to practice what one preaches. You preach morality of action and a final inevitable Hades. Very well, then."

He turned abruptly away and entered the saloon. His step was quick and uneasy. He chuckled to himself as he entered the bar-room:

"Thunder! That stiff chap will soon become acquainted with this new doctrine. It is the strangeness of it that impresses him now."

Burnett went on his way with his head bowed in a thoughtful mood. He rehearsed seriously every word of the previous conversation. However strange and easy was the new plan of theology, it was a very dangerous something to tamper with. He shook his head and meditated and soliloquized:—

"It is all folly, for God's word says, 'Watch and pray' and 'Work, for the night is coming.' Ah, how surely the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. He

knew there was no redemption for him, for he did not ask for more than just a drop of water to cool his parched tongue."

Leland was strong to resist the power of such a theology. How prone are the youthful hearts to yield to the allurements of every wild doctrine that some clamoring, pessimistical or skeptical fanatic tries to establish!

The darkening shades of approaching evening began to fall over the city before Leland reached his new home. Lilian saw him coming up the street, and ran to meet him at the gate. He lifted her in his arms, and she greeted him with a kiss.

"We will play checkers to-night, won't we, Mr. Burnett?" she asked gleefully, and a little bit anxious.

"If you wish; we shall play awhile. Then I have something to tell you and to show you."

"Oh, Mr. Burnett, what can it be?"

"I'll tell you by and by."

They reached the house; and as they were ascending the steps Lilian was telling him something that had happened at school that day.

"Why! Lilian! Flirting with Mr. Burnett, are you?" asked Mrs. Dillion, who was standing in the door as they came up.

"Oh, no, mamma, I am just giving him a welcome."

Mrs. Dillion smiled at Leland as he passed into the corridor; then, after lifting her beautiful child into her arms and kissing her fondly she went into the house.

That night, after the game was over, Lilian remained in the drawing-room with Leland, show-

ing him her pretty books which had been given her as Christmas presents and birthday gifts. Among these was a beautiful morocco-bound New Testament. Leland took it and looked through it carefully, and there was several minutes of silence. Presently Leland began:

"Lilian, do you like beautiful stories?"

"Yes, sir, I always delight to read them."

"Did you ever read the beautiful story of Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, who grew to manhood, was mocked and scorned and hated, then crucified upon the cruel cross that the world might be redeemed from sin?"

"No, Mr. Burnett," she said with a sigh. "I never read that story. Is it a beautiful one?"

"Indeed, it is beautiful. It is a brief story, but a love story. You will find it in this pretty Testament."

"Then, if it is so short, read it to me. I like to hear you read."

Lilian, you remind me of a queen who commands her subject to obey her royal charge. My little majesty, I will read to you."

Leland took from the center-table the Holy Volume, and read passage after passage of Christ and his ministry. The child listened with awe and silence. Finding that the child was deeply interested he continued to read; and when he reached the cruel mockery of the unfaithful disciple, the betrayal, the arrest, the trial, the condemnation, and last and most cruel of all the shameful death upon the cross, Lilian's eyes began to be dimmed with tears. When he finished the chapter he closed the volume, laid it back on the table and

looking up at the silent child he saw the tears trickling down her cheeks. He smiled and stretched forth his hands, and she came to him.

"Oh, Mr. Burnett, that is the grandest story I ever heard. I could hear you read it a thousand times over. It makes me want to be good. Mamma says I am already good, but I am not as good as I should be."

Burnett lifted her and kissed her tenderly.

"Your pure soul is just what God wants it to be. Your mother is right; you are good."

"I shall try to be better. I want you to read that story to me as often as you can, and help me to be a better girl."

"God bless you, child; that will be the happiest privilege of my life!" exclaimed Leland, clasping the child to his heart with sacred ardency. Silence reigned for a few minutes. The breezes stole through the open window, and touched the little cluster of carnations and the pretty green-tendrilled white lilies drooped in pretty enameled vases on the table and shook the magnificent lace curtains till the moonlight fairly danced and the alternating lights and shadows trembled ecstatically over the carpeted floor.

As Burnett held the child in his arms, strange tidings seemed to waft to him from afar, and listening to the beating of the child's heart he thought of another beautiful moonlight night when he lifted another pure child to his bosom and felt the rapturous throb, throb, throb, of her heart.

The child withdrew from his arms, and with a

courteous, demure bow she bade him good-night, and repaired to her little bed-chamber.

It was one of those rare moonlight nights in July when summer, with all of her pomp and splendor, calmly dreams in quietude, with her gorgeous, verdant drapery drawn about her, while she is conscious of the regal splendor that is cast about her by a glorious moon. Pearly shell-clouds with bright borders, collected like an archipelago of cloud-islets in the calm, distant blue; other clouds, like sweeping masses of tangled veiling, trailed along beneath the moon; a steady breeze stirred the shade trees in Mr. Dillion's yard and whispered unknown messages to the bowing, dew-laden lilies and roses. All this scene of regal splendor was seen by Leland Burnett, who was still awake, thinking of the past, which drifted to him in bits of sweet but sad memories; and he at last thought of the child who had never heard the story of Jesus. There was something altogether lovable about the gentle, docile child that was a rare feature in the disposition of other children, and he rejoiced that she would become a Christian through his influence. He, poor, weak being, would bring one beautiful soul to join that immaculate band which shall be chosen to sing God's praises in the New Jerusalem.

Lilian loved Leland in that way that a child can love one whom it intuitively knows can be trusted. Leland loved Lilian in that way that a hungry heart loves a child when its greatest and most precious idol is far away, and when it feels an emptiness which none but a child's sympathy can supply.

Late one afternoon Leland was reading Shakespeare's tragedy on Brutus's stabbing Caesar when Lilian crept up noiselessly and without being noticed, and stole a kiss from Leland's hand. He looked up quickly and saw her standing before him with her hands behind her and a smile beaming in the bright little face.

"Guess what I have for you, Mr. Burnett?"

"A big, green peach!" said Leland gaily, whereupon the child laughed heartily and flourished an exquisite bouquet of mignonettes, portulacas, pansies, pinks and calliopsis neatly arranged.

"Does that look like 'a big, green peach?' "

"Well, three cheers for you!" exclaimed Leland with enthusiasm. "This is a treat. Oh, what pretty pansies! And this is for me?"

"Yes, I gathered them for you since I came from school."

"Many thanks," exclaimed Leland, as he took them and kissed them fondly.

"Oh, you are reading from Shakespeare! Pray read to me! I heard Prof. H——— lecture on the English authors, and he mentioned the greatness of Shakespeare."

"I fear your young mind would not comprehend his meaning."

"Then could you not explain to me? You do explain so well."

"Perhaps that would be bettter. Then we can talk it over in our own language. I shall read to you about the Seven Ages, an extract from his wonderful piece called 'As You Like It.' The extract is found in Act II, Scene 7. It is about a duke banished from his own country, perhaps,

and in company with one Jacques and other Lords. They are sitting at a plain repast which they have prepared in the garden of Arden. Orlando, who has been wandering through the woodland in search of food for an old servant, Adam, who can 'go no further,' suddenly comes upon them and draws his sword. While his sword is drawn he says, 'Forbear; he dies that touches any of this fruit until I and my affairs are answered!' Now listen while I read what followed."

Burnett slowly and carefully read the extract, pausing now and then to explain a difficult phrase or an intricate sentence. The child listened quietly, while a pleased expression on her face told her that she comprehended at least a part of what he read. When he finished it she said:—

"Poor Orlando! he thought those men whom he came upon were cruel, savage men. But the duke and Jacques proved to be almost saints instead of savages."

"And that poor old servant had followed him because he loved him. What a beautiful thought, this precious love! Lilian, do you know that love is the sweetest virtue in the world?"

"I have learned to think so since you have lived with us."

"Do you know, Lilian, that love sometimes makes one unhappy?"

"Are you unhappy, Mr. Burnett?" the child asked, with an earnest, sincere look.

"Sometimes," he answered wearily. Then, wishing to avert the conversation, he opened the book, and with his fingers pointed to a paragraph said:—

"Listen to what Jacques says about the world

and its people: 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women mere players; they have their exits and entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages.'" He continued:

"Now you heard me read those seven ages a short time ago; can you name them now?"

"At first the infant, then the whining schoolboy, then the lover, the soldier, the justice, and the sixth age is of the character with spectacles on his nose and pouch on his side. The last age is when childishness returns. Did I get them right?"

"Yes, you repeated them in regular order. You have a wonderful memory."

The child laughed merrily.

"I've treated you mean, Mr. Burnett. I've been hearing the class in English Literature rehearse that so often that I have learned it myself."

Leland laughed good-humoredly. Just then Mr. Dillion joined them and all went into the house.

That night Leland prayed and studied and wrote till very late on an article which he was preparing for the M———. He paused now and then to think of the result that might come from the writing of the article. Perhaps some wretched soul would be encouraged by its inspiration. Some one would read it with enthusiasm, no doubt, while others—the critics—would howl and scoff and deride the author's rudeness of style. This latter class he did not regard with the least thought of seriousness. He rather heard their clamoring criticisms below him without looking down, as though it were a matter of course that they would clamor

like jealous pedants to show their ability to classify erudition. In his previous article they had found plagiarism and had denounced his work as something which dwelt too much in statistics and as something very dry,—that the space it occupied would be more profitably devoted to a patent medicine advertisement. All this was food for the sneering, buffeting, impetuous critics who hungered and struggled for some opportunity to display their learning. But Leland was undismayed, and submitted his work to only one Critic—that omniscient critic who doeth all things well. Leland was conscious that his superior intellect far surpassed that of his contemporary writers. In fact, he knew that he was capable of criticising their criticism. He was silent and amused while they hissed and scorned. He knew that aside from his own imperfections his work was not altogether a failure or so offensive to the refined taste of literary people. While this turmoil of criticism was raging, Leland did not fail to notice with perfect gratification the lauding comments of some of the leading Southern papers upon his eminent articles; they even honored him by quoting parts of his work. He felt sure that he was not altogether a failure in the world. A warm, fervent sensation welled up in his heart when he thought that Mamie Homean would read the praises lavished upon him. She would be pleased then, and it was a kind of quietus for his weary heart to feel that her sanction would be placed upon his work. What would it matter if a whole world buffeted him if she were on his side? While he wrote on, and the thought of expected criticism upon his

orthodox articles recurred to him, he almost unconsciously rehearsed over and over to himself the words of Solomon: "He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame," and "Who so loveth instruction loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof is brutish." To reprove these scorners would be to get shame unto himself; and he would not hate their reproof because he might become brutish, for even though he did not desire their reproof, he might get instruction from their vain folly. Very well he knew that the purpose of these higher critics was to humiliate him and to crush his youthful hopes and aspirations. But what could a few snarling hounds do when all the people generally praised his efforts and lauded his ability as a theologian to the skies? Though he felt all his superiority as a literary scholar, he was devoid of all conceit concerning his efficiency. He felt that there were some errors in his contributions, but that that was a very prominent failure on the part of his contemporaries in the literary field. He put aside their insulting remarks by giving Harris's antithesis, that "Easy writing is hard writing."

During all his days of hard study, he never forgot one sweet face with pensive eyes, classical forehead, and sweet, flexible lips. Should that sweet face vanish from his sight forever, all his hopes and noble aspirations would crumble to dust and his soul would wither and die!

He finished the article at last; and, after invoking God's blessings upon it and His preserving care over him, he retired.

Leland was diligently writing one afternoon at his desk when Lilian came into the library and gave him a letter which had just arrived. He expressed his thanks and bade her take a seat, which she did reluctantly, as she noticed a frown upon his face. She watched him break the seal and begin to read. As he read his face began to clear up with a pleased smile. When he had finished it, he looked up and saw Lilian gazing at him with bright tears in her eyes. Leland caught her in his arms, kissing her repeatedly.

"Why do you cry when you know I am happy?"

"Because I love you," she whispered. There followed a long silence, broken at length by Lilian's voice:—

"Why does Mr. B——— and Mr. H——— and Judge A——— and a few others talk so cruelly about your pieces in the paper?"

"How do you know they do??"

"I heard mamma and papa say they were criticising your work."

"Do not mind that, Lilian; if I do not care you need not; they must necessarily cease some day."

"But it is cruel for them to treat you that way when you do not deserve it."

"But after a while they will praise me higher than they have scorned me down."

Lilian spent the rest of the evening with Burnett. His power over the child was boundless, and he knew it. Her character was flexible to his will. He could make a great Christian personality of her. As they bade each other good-night Lilian asked:—

"Did that letter make you glad?"

"Yes."

"Then it was from some one whom you love?"

"Yes, it was from a sweet girl, a good girl,—one who loves me and whom I love."

CHAPTER VII.

MAMIE HOMEAN soon grew tired of and disgusted with society; and, withdrawing abruptly from its circles, she devoted her time to the study of the greatest and most vital religious questions of the day. She was about the age to begin to be useful in the service of God, and she must make preparations. Her dream of childhood had been of the time when she might do something for the Lord; when she would go out into the field of labor and win souls for Christ. How silly and trifling, how empty of genuine lasting pleasure, were the worldly amusements current in the circles of society, when a vast field of labor awaited earnest workers to labor in it for the Master! How grand, how wonderful to work for Jesus!

The cruel treachery of society had wounded her pride. It was one evening when she was at the social gathering at Mrs. Truit's that she received the insinuation against her obscure birth.

One night, several weeks after, she was resting upon her little bed and thinking of the insult she had received at Mrs. Truit's party. Her face burned with hot anger and indignation, and the blood beat heavily in her temples. She thought of Leland far away. What would he say if he

knew that such insolent, contemptuous treatment had been shown her? She was glad he did not know. She reached her hand toward the little table by her bed and lifted the letter she had received from Leland that evening, and leaning out to the moonlight that streamed through the window to see the familiar handwriting she pressed it to her lips, murmuring plaintively:

"God bless him! He is worth a thousand honors such as society might give."

She replaced it upon the table; and, as she laid her head upon her pillow she could not avoid crying, for she heard the insolent remarks ringing derisively in her ears.

She turned her face and hid it in the folds of the soft pillow. Tears welled up in her eyes, and she wept a long time.

At last she went to sleep and dreamed of Leland.

Mamie absolutely avoided the society of Mrs. Tolliver's guests, and turned her whole attention to her books and to the organization of a religious society which she was endeavoring to establish in the humbler, friendless suburbs of the city, which she visited very often. Books, congenial friends, and warm, religious talks with the simple and lowly in life she loved; but voluminous breakfast gowns, gorgeous costumes, affectation and dissimulation she loathed and despised. Mrs. Tolliver began to notice her marked reticence, but said nothing. The house was frequented by notable citizens of West Nashville, but Mamie evaded the necessity of meeting them by having the excuse that she had to fulfill an engagement with her

fellow-workers; and as Mrs. Tolliver did not care if she were absent, she spent much of her time alone in the library or in the homes of those who were members of her organized society, and she seldom met Mrs. Tolliver or Alton except at meal time.

The little neighborhood which composed Mamie's field of labor began to enliven and take a step forward toward progression. It began to flourish under her leadership. She finally began to teach school there. She abandoned Mrs. Tolliver's home, and boarded with a family nearer the building in which she taught. She was ambitious to make her own support. The check which Burnett had given her had been lost unaccountably. And though heir to that amount, and to an additional sum of a million dollars which fell to her from the deceased Mrs. Homean, she was nevertheless poor and without a home. She would not tell Burnett that his check was lost; she would struggle through alone.

She was becoming more and more lonely every day. She could not become reconciled to the death of Mrs. Homean; and Leland was far away, where she could never see his face or hear his rich, mellow voice. But she found some consolation in her labor among the poorer classes. It was there that she felt the touch of congenial sympathies and found alleviation for her misery by frequent association with the warm-hearted Christians, which supported and strengthened her mind with hope, joy and courage. Surely all this, together with the precious love of the Lord, was enough to console her in all the afflictions of life.

It was one Thursday afternoon, during vacation, when Mrs. King was honored by a number of guests who had been invited to dine with her, that Mamie took a pretty bouquet of flowers and stole away to the cemetery. She lingered late, and ere she retraced her steps the glory of a full moon spread over the twilight and dispelled the coming darkness. A thousand voices were hushed, and the evening breezes were lulled to sleep in the rocking cradle of the tree tops. With a pensive expression in her eyes, she looked over the distant haze of moonlight, and a secret sensation that always stole into her peculiar nature touched her heart with an enthusiasm and strange inspiration and she almost forgot her sadness. Her eyes wandered about and drank in all the beauty and charm that such a night of shimmering moonlight and peace and silence could exhibit. As she walked along she took off her bonnet and shook down her soft brown hair till it fell in waving masses about her shoulders; then a melody, sweet and low and full of pathos, burst like the rare cadence of a heavenly chant from her lips:

"Down in the valley where sunshine
Falls all the long summer day,
Stands out by the roadside a cottage,
But, O, it is far, far away.

"'Tis there my happiness was in childhood,
When mother's dear face I could see.
Yet now both cot and garden
Are only fond memories to me."

As the sweet refrain hushed upon the evening air she sighed, and the cherished bit of faded memory came back to her with a tender touch and she smiled with a charm of tears in her eyes as she thought of a mother whose arms had protected and cared for her and whose tender lips had pressed many a sweet kiss upon her infant lips. But it was all a vague memory.

Just as she was turning into a little path that led to the place where she boarded, Alton Tolliver stepped out from a cluster of honeysuckles in front of her and extended his hands toward her. Mamie saw a strange flash in his feverishly brilliant eyes; and she was about to recoil when he grasped both of her uplifted hands and drew her close to him and whispered:—

"My love, my darling! I have been waiting here for your return. Oh, stay and listen to me!"

"What would you say then, Alton?" she asked wonderingly, but with firmness and coldness; and he grasped her hand so tightly that it ached.

"I must tell you what you already know—that I love you better than I love my wretched life!"

"Why do you say, Alton, that I already know?"

"You ask me why. Ah, my love, you know that I loved you with an ardent love before you went away from my home."

"I had no reasons for thinking such a thing; besides, Alton, it would be an unpardonable presumption on my part to venture such a conjecture."

"Hush, hush! You shall not baffle me in such a manner. Oh, child, why did you go away from

my home? Simply because you know that I loved you!"

She looked wonderingly at him without answering him. His eyes sought her gaze, and for a moment they fixed their eyes upon each other; hers cold, innocent and calm; his passionate, unsteady and unnaturally brilliant.

"Come with me," he said at length, and led her to a little mossy mound and pointed to a blue-steel, pearl-handled pistol which he had left there. It glistened dully as the moonlight shimmered over it.

"That," he began firmly, "is my 'Alpha and Omega.' It will be either for weal or woe for me."

He stopped and picked it up and waved it wildly over his head. Placing it in its case he went with her on her way home. As they walked along they began to talk. He spoke in that low tone of eloquence which always alters the masculine voice to a lovely tenderness. Here and there a slip of moonlight stole through the tree tops and lighted up their way; and a frightened bird would flutter from a low bough as they passed under it and would pause just ahead of them as if to listen to the music of love as it sounded from the vocal chords of the suitor and to see the poetic dream that shone from the mirror of his rapture-lighted features.

"You say you have been mistreated," he reasoned, "and that such a life of exile from those who should be worthy associates is hard. Then, if you will accept my true affections and join your destiny with mine, I shall give you advantages

that will far eclipse anything you can dream of, and you will enjoy happiness of highest felicity."

"And you would love me?" she asked shyly.

"O darling, you should not doubt me! Have I not told you the earnestness of my love; and have I not proved that devotion? Oh, I cannot live without you!"

"Alton, it seems that I care for you more than I would for a special friend. But I cannot accept your poposition."

"But you will learn to love me. Oh, if you send me away from you, my tortured heart will seek an end of this mortal existence at the muzzle of this destructive weapon."

He placed the pistol against his heart, and continued:

"You may send me away from you, and you, the priceless jewel of Beauty's shrine, may go on with a thousand worshippers at your feet; great men may woo you and the world may pay great honors to you, but you will never find a love so deep, so true, so earnest, so devoted as mine!"

Alton felt this, and his pleading eyes told it.

"But, Alton," she said testily, "these are fair promises and very inviting ones, but they might be easier said than done."

"Oh, you will not trust me! Why! My wealth is at your disposal. Love makes everything valueless in its sight. Besides my wealth, my affection should be a valid inducement." This with affected timidity. "Oh, must I say that I love you, sweet Mamie? Dare I speak to Roscoe Homean's foster-daughter the words with which I would woo charming Mamie Homean?"

She raised her unsteady eyes, but did not answer. Her body quivered like that of some poor, cold child. But why did she shudder? Ah! for the passing moment of pleasant romance she had forgotten herself to trifle with the affections of an infatuated lover. Her conscience told her that she had done wrong.

She stopped suddenly and looked Alton full in the face.

"Alton Tolliver, you may consider yourself dismissed. It is not far to my boarding-place, and I am not afraid to go alone."

She flournished her hand with an imperative gesture, and he looked at her wonderingly. But something in her eyes admonished him not to linger. He bowed courteously and turned away.

The evening breezes fanned her flying chestnut hair about her temples, and sang softly through the trees. The cold light of the stars faintly shimmered over her pathway and over her stern, beautiful face, where a visage of loneliness lurked —a reflection of desolation which had never dwelt there before. Her conscience smote her with powerful repentance. She had never realized such a desolation—such desolation and agony of soul! She passed through the meadow lot—a nearer way —toward the house, startling a rabbit that had been taking exercise in physical culture, and disturbing a cluster of ducks that were sleeping near the little brook that ran through the lot; and when she reached the house looked wistfully toward the city and murmured:—

"I would not be there again! Oh, what a change since an hour ago!"

Before this her life had been calm and unbroken by remorse; it had been a precious life of pleasant duties; and her girlhood had been blessed with innocency; but now the cherubim of wrath stood out against her.

CHAPTER VIII.

One pleasant morning in April Leland Burnett and his little friend, Lilian Dillion, were standing out on the front piazza at Mr. Dillion's, watching the little birds playing about the eaves of the building just across the street, when the shrill whistle of the postman at the gate attracted their atttention. Lilian sprang forward quickly, laughing at Leland because he was "so slow," and of course she was the first to receive their mail.

"Have they quieted the riot among the strikers in Chicago yet?" asked Leland of the hurrying postman.

"No, sir," he answered briefly. "Not likely to till the 'Rebs' taste of the army's blood!" and he went on.

Among the articles of mail, Leland received a letter from Mamie. He took it from the other mail and put it in his pocket till he reached the library, where he took a seat near the window and broke the seal. His heart beat wildly with gratification of joy, and a pleasant glow of bliss shone in his face. It was an early answer to his last letter, and surely there must be something very good in it that she wanted him to know as well as herself.

He unfolded the missive and scanned it from the dating to the saluation, and there his countenance fell. A puzzled expression wrinkled his brow. *It was typwritten;* and he could not identify the writer. As he read on, an ashy, livid visage gathered over his fallen countenance and his fingers clutched the parchment tightly. When he finished it, he looked up with eyes ablaze with agony, mortification and astonishment. His lips trembled with a tremor of anguish, and a low, stifled groan escaped his lips. The world grew dark about him and whirled with ten thousand times ten thousand demons. Every noble principle in him seemed to be completely drowned in the flood of despair and anguish which swept over him in that brief moment. He looked at the terrible message again. Slowly and carefully he read every line and word:

MR. BURNETT:—I implore you now to dismiss all your affection for me, as I no longer entertain any particular regard for you. Of course we are still friends. I am deeply involved in my work, and have found a more congenial suitor nearer home; bury forever in oblivion our little romance and think not of me.

Yours respectfully,

MAMIE HOMEAN.

How utterly impossible it seemed that Mamie Homean, that proud but noble girl, would stoop to such vile dissimulation as that. Yet it surely must be of her own words. She had typewritten one or two letters to him before that "just for

fun," but they were always addressed in her own handwriting, just as this one was.

He bitterly reproached himself for ever having trusted the woman. He had always distrusted other women; why had he so foolishly confided in this one? The very evil that he had thought himself free from had entangled him—the fascination of a woman. But, somehow, he could not put Mamie Homean entirely from his heart. She was enthroned there in spite of all opposition. His reason rejected her, but his heart clung to her. His love for that child had become a part of his life, and to wrest it from him would almost be to take his life. Yet he felt that he had been foolish enough to trust so foolish and treacherous a thing as a woman.

While he stood so still and gazed at the floor with a fixed stare, Lilian looked up at him and started back.

"Why, Mr. Burnett! What troubles you so? Are you ill?"

Her words aroused him from his oblivion, and he groaned pitifully as he answered:—

"I think I must be ill, but not seriously, I hope."

His voice was husky, and as he started toward the door he staggered.

"You should lie down, Mr. Burnett."

He did not answer her, but walked on out into the study room and dropped wearily into his chair. There he buried his face in his hands and gave himself up to deep and painful thoughts. How long he remained there he did not know, but he felt the presence of another in his room, and look-

ing up saw Mr. Mathes standing in the doorway smiling upon him.

"I fear this is a very rude intrustion on my part, Mr. Burnett," said Mr. Mathes, apologetically.

"Welcome, Mr. Mathes. Take a chair."

Leland tried to be cheerful, but a troubled and anxious expression lingered on his face. With artificial pleasure and with an assumed air of dignity, Mr. Mathes places himself in the large cushioned chair by the window, and the morning passed away while they engaged in another theological debate.

Alas! for the fatal hour when these two gentlemen met; when the beautiful picture of fancy's pure and innocent taste came to Leland Burnett through the false but seemingly fair and true friendship. It is then that the confidence of youth is led away into an awful, awful abyss of an inevitable course.

"Well, Mr. Mathes," said Leland, after they had started the discussion, "your argument from where you begin seems to be self-evident, but it leaves me entirely unsatisfied. You have never explained the origin of these bold, rash sayings. They are entirely unfounded."

"Why, Mr. Burnett, if you remember, I explained to you in an interview with you a short while ago that these principles are founded upon the Divine Scriptures,—a portion of the at least."

"'A portion,' indeed!" answered Leland, haughtily. "What are you going to do with the other portion?"

"If I must be candid, Mr. Burnett, I must de-

clare my absolute unbelief in all the Bible save those passages which I have chosen for my new doctrine."

Leland smiled reprovingly and thought for a moment.

"Do you believe in the Golden Rule?" he asked at length.

"I do!" said Mathes, emphatically.

"You understand it to teach us to love our Lord with all our soul, mind, strength and heart, and our neighbor as ourselves?"

"Yes, sir."

"And yet you say that there is no final redemption for some who fail to obey this rule? Now I think it becomes a man to be consistent. Why should God require his people to obey this rule when He loves us to the extent that He will not inflict eternal punishment upon us for our willful disobedience and sin? And again you say that you believe that our Lord is a just God. Now, the strangeness of this doctrine is its inconsistency. Do you believe a just God would require his people to live wholly blameless in order to enter the portals of heaven while others He would release from all obligations and save them at last after they had lived a life of sin and rebellion against his throne? The Bible is founded upon that Golden Rule—Love to God and Love to Man. 'Upon these two hang all the law and the prophets.' Am I to understand you to believe this?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why is only a part of the Scriptures to

be accepted when all the law and the prophets are to be based upon these two injunctions?"

Mr. Mathes became exceedingly nervous and looked very much discomfited, but he managed to say:—

"It is my doctrine to believe only that which I can understand. For that reason I declare my absolute unbelief in those parts of the Scriptures that I cannot understand."

Leland's argument was shattered for a moment, and he could say nothing. He was bewildered. The doctrine of believing only what one could understand struck him forcibly.

Alas! It was a stroke upon his conscience. The idea seemed consistent to him. Nevertheless, he resumed the argument after a brief pause and bewilderment:—

"To be consistent, Mr. Mathes, we must reject the Bible entirely, or else accept its teachings wholly; for every part of it bears such a close relation to the other that to separate them would be to render it a base fatuity—a flaunting lie! Mr. Mathes, I mean no disrespect to you, but I must be candid. Pardon me when I say that you have studied the Divine Scriptures till you have formed an orthodoxy which permits you to live after your own rathers; and if you fail in that, you cling to the hope of being rescued from hell—a redeemed probationer! Ah, my friend, hear my monition: it is a dangerous thing to tamper with your eternal interest in such a wicked way!"

Leland rose to his feet, while his enthusiasm rose to an ardent heat. He looked down on Mr. Mathes and saw the darkening visage, and he knew

that his censuring words of keen reprehension had been driven home to the very heart of the skeptic.

They soon ended their discussion, and Mr. Mathes bade him adieu.

After Mathes had left, Burnett walked anxiously back and forth in his room, deeply engrossed in the strange new philosophy of "believing only what one could understand." This new, speculative theology strangely impressed him. At last he sat down and gave himself up to the strange thoughts of the stranger message that he had received from Mamie.

A strange desolation came over him. Every future hope and noble aspiration seemed to vanish.

"Oh, if I could only see her beautiful face once more!" he said to himself. "If I could have one little interview with her I could win her back to my heart. Surely that noble girl does not mean to disappoint me in that way. I would rather lose all the world beside than to lose Mamie Homean. If I were the greatest king in the world I would gladly abdicate a throne rather than part with my love!"

Resolutions formed rapidly in his mind—resolutions as unchangeable as the Alpine heights—and they gathered in his frenzied brain to go quickly to Mamie and plead his love to her again.

He hurriedly packed his telescope and prepared for the trip south. After a brief explanation to Mr. and Mrs. Dillion that some very urgent business in the South had very unexpectedly called him away, he hurried to the depot, where he boarded the train and was soon on his way. Good

connections landed him in Nashville in a short time. His heart beat madly with hope and desire to see his loved one. Somehow he felt that her cruel letter was meant just to try him, and that the joyful surprise that his arrival would secure for him a loving welcome. Ah! how he hoped and trusted.

It was late in the afternoon before he reached the outskirts of the city where his loved one resided. The purple glow of sunset was fast fading into a lovely serene twilight. The gentle murmur of the breezes was heard among the trees, and the cricket's chick-a-chick-chick had begun to render the solemn night a solemn one indeed. Heaven's sparkle-lit jewels began to slowly marshal on the skies, from which they poured forth constant volleys of fairy-like effulgence upon the retreating forces of daylight. The soft moonlight tickled the world with straws of light; the cool dewdrops began to bejewel the grass and flowers with ten thousand times ten thousand sparkling diamonds; and the gentle breeze glided along the silence-wrapt night and mingled its sweet strains with the low murmur of the Cumberland.

They told him that Mamie had gone down to the river to take a boat-ride, and he hurried on. Anxiety quickened his footsteps as he pictured to himself a pleasant rare romance, in which he imagined he felt the warm clasp of her soft little hand and saw the pure love swimming in the liquid depths of her fine brown eyes. He was hopeful, then dubious; he was courageous, then afraid; yet he hurried on faster and faster toward the river.

At length he reached a rugged boulder which

reached out over the river and only about ten feet above it. He looked anxiously up the river, and saw through the distant gloaming a litttle boat slowing moving down the stream. Eagerly he watched and waited. At last he saw her—his loved one—row out her little boat to the bank just a few feet up the river from the point or boulder on which he waited. He saw and heard her drop the dripping oar into the boat and step out with the chain in her hand. But just as she was about to fasten the chain into a hook in the rock and as he was about to make his descent to her, his eyes fell upon a folded piece of paper lying on the rock just in front of him. He saw her name written upon the last line, and curiosity prompted him to take it up and read it. He unfolded it and read:—

DEAR ALTON:—I trust that you will meet me at the river this evening, for I have something serious to tell you. Oh, do not delay one moment, for I think so much of you, and this message that I have for you is for your and my eternal interest. If you love me as you say you do, oh, come, dear Alton, to me! I shall be waiting, hoping, trusting and praying for you! Your own,

MAMIE.

The paper fluttered from his fingers; his hands went up in despair; and a deep groan issued from his blanched lips, while a blaze of frenzy leaped into his dark gray eyes. Alas! it was true; she had deserted him; she had ceased to love him, and the "more congenial suitor" was his dear, trusted friend, Alton Tolliver. Ah, he might have known

it! She said in her letter that she thought so much of Alton and that he had told her that he loved her in return. There it was, in her own handwriting; there was no doubting it.

He looked down to see her once more; to see the beautiful child that had turned him from a Christian into a wretched devil, and he saw the figure of a man moving toward her while she stood with her face buried in her hands and crying passionately. The stranger's hands were extended toward her imploringly, and she fell on her knees at his feet.

Leland refused to see more; and, throwing up his hands in anguish, he cried out: "O God, sustain me!"

They heard him not, and he started madly away, picking up the little note as he went. His noble self had burned to ashes and left him a depraved wretch. All hope died and aspiration with it,—only his love survived—and an insatiable desire for revenge flamed up in his heart.

He went to his room in the hotel, procured his gun and hurried back with the fiendish intent to kill his treacherous friend before he left the spot where he had seen him last. Every step he made seemed tardy, and he pushed on with maddening rage.

But when he reached the spot, there was no one there. He cursed God and man and himself and all the world. Vengeance had kindled a new and greater fire in his heart, and he rushed madly away in search of the man for whose blood he thirsted. He searched in vain all that night.

The following morning he learned that Mr.

Tolliver had gone the previous evening to Washington. He hurriedly packed his belongings and boarded the train for the Capital again. In his heart he cursed the tardy train and even himself for not being able to fly there.

When at last he reached Washington he did not even go to Mr. Dillion's, so deeply was he engrossed in the bloodthirsty pursuit of his rival. But he failed to find him; no one had seen him arrive there, and none even knew of such a man.

At last one evening Leland gave up hunting for him, and started wearily on his way to Mr. Dillion's. He had not quite reached the city, and the moon was shining bright, when he saw a man coming toward him. The man failed to see Leland till he confronted him, when he threw up his hands with a loud cry of fear. Leland advanced on him, and fired his gun. Through the vanishing smoke he saw his rival fall. It was Alton at last. He stood by him like a statue, looking down upon him pitilessly and hearing his groans. His heart was benumbed, but he was calm. Suddenly he fancied he heard a voice—the Voice of Eternal Justice—saying:

"Cain, where is Abel, thy brother?" and unconsciously he answered in startling tones:

"I know not; am I my brother's keeper?"

"What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood cryeth unto me from the ground!" was the awful answer. And Leland looked down upon him whom he had endeavored to murder. The bloody face startled him, and he fled from the spot. All the way home that distorted, bloody face haunted him, and again and again he heard

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that Eternal Voice of Justice which first startled the ancient murderer with the words, "Where is thy brother?"

Remorse for his terrible crime overcame him at last; and, cursing God, creation and all mankind, he gave himself up to Fate. We lose him in the great throng of cold, heartless, pessimistical humanity!

BOOK II.

CHAPTER IX.

THREE years later Mr. Dillion and family moved to a beautiful summer home hidden away in the wild Rocky Mountains, where great cliffs and huge boulders frown from angry heights and where the great forest harbors every suggestion that is wild and that remains of primitive ages.

They chose this location because of its charming seclusiveness and its wild enchantments. There lies, buried deep in the depths of Orological formations, the richest dreams of the enthusiastic scientist. The undiscovered strata of prehistoric ages suggest not a more desirable place for geological research than in the huge peaks and ranges of these great mountains. There is an impressive strangeness about that force which upheaved these great mountains and which had its origin in the contraction of the cooling globe.

It was a beautiful morning in July, when summer's dream reposed in every flower, floated upon every gentle breeze, touched every bird-song with gladness and brooded like a sweet heavenly spirit over the deep, cool valleys and shady hills.

On this particular morning, Mr. Dillion was

swinging slowly back and forth in the hammock which he had suspended between two shade-trees east of the house. In this way he spent the long, peaceful days of the summer months. The beautiful gardens looked like rare extracts from Paradise, as they spread out about the house. Four narrow, cool, shady walks led each way from the four sides of the mansion. A snow-white, fancy iron picket fence stretched along each side of the yard of beautiful gardens; and at the center of each side, where the walk-ways egressed, there were beautiful gates, named respectively: "Arcola Gate," on the north; "Babylon Gate," on the south; "Hades Gate," on the west, and "Habakkuk Gate," on the east. Each gate bore in gilded letters its name.

A cool, shady road extended entirely around the fence, then turned into one single road which led down into a dark valley of dense forest.

The magnificent mansion which occupied the center of the yard was constructed of valuable material, and was of artistic proportions. Its grandeur was imposing, and when one looked at it there was an impressiveness about it that commanded great admiration. And it looked grander hidden away there from all civilization; and its magnificence was enhanced by the fact that it was the only representative of art or architecture there buried deep in the very heart of Nature's wilds.

The main entrance to the mansion was by the walk-way that led from the Hades Gate, and just over the pretty marble archway on the grand piazza glittered the golden letters that spelled and pronounced the name of the magnificent building—

"GETHSEMANE." All the front yard of "Gethsemane" was occupied by a beautiful floral garden filled with every variety of the prettiest and most cultured flowers in the world. On the east side there was a beautiful house, which stood about the center of a pretty rich meadow. In this little meadow-lot grazed nearly every kind of tame animal. Some would be grazing, some would be romping about in play, and some would be lying and tranquilly sleeping under the cool shades of the spreading trees. The other gardens bounding on the north and south were utilized in the cultivation of the various vegetables which the family residing there consumed.

It was indeed a rare beauty-spot for such a rugged, uninhabited mountain. Strange to say, it was located miles away from any town or village. A few poor cottagers, forming a settlement in a mountain valley about four miles away, marked the only place of inhabitants in all the vicinity. The only visitors that frequented the beautiful resort were the sweet-spirited mountain birds that came every morning to sing and play among the creeping vines which clung to the walls and wound from column to column laden with the night's cool dewdrops. And some lingered there and made merry all the long summer day. Now and then a rabbit ventured far enough down the branch on the north side to romp and play with his mate on the narrow meadowed margin of the brook and take a peep at the great mansion, then bound away at the approach of some one who chanced to come through the garden to see them.

The owner of this beautiful mansion was a gentleman of whom there is but little known. He was known as Mr. Cain, and he spent very much of his time in the eastern countries. Through an advertisement Mr. Dillion learned of this beautiful summer resort, and by a written communication with Mr. Cain in the Old World he contracted to rent the abode for a summer home.

The few weeks of his residence there had been very pleasant indeed. There were rare luxuries in the elaborately furnished building, as well as in the cool oriental shade, and besides all these they could spend many happy hours reclining and slumbering among the ferns and flowers of the gardens.

This still, peaceful morning, while Mr. Dillion reclined in his hammock, reading "Quo Vadis," Lilian stole softly over the thick carpet of velvety green and peeped over his shoulder. With a smile as glorious as that of an angel, she gently touched her tender lips upon his careworn face, and called in a low, sweet voice:

"Father! Father! Guess what I have for you?"

He observed the glowing, beautiful face with a heart beating with rapture, and gathering her in his arms he looked toward heaven and said:

"O God, give me a spirit of gratitude, that I may more sincerely thank thee for this pure, sweet child!"

When he released her, she stood at his feet, looking up into his face with a look of bewilderment. Her face betrayed a dubious smile, but in the calm depths of her eyes there was revealed, as

they always had done, a pensive, anxious look, and, with tears gathering in them, she said:—

"Father, why do you call me an angel? I have no pretty little wings, and I am not good like the angels."

Mr. Dillion said nothing, and in the silence he fancied he heard the very silence echoing with the songs of the grand angels praising God. He lost himself in solemn meditation, and some moments elapsed in silence, which was broken by the low, sweet voice of Lilian again asking:—

"Father! Father! Guess what I have for you!"

"Why, my child, I guess you have another sweet kiss for me."

"Yes, I know; but what else?" and she held forth in her little dimpled hands a beautiful bouquet of flowers dripping with dew.

"Take them, father. Mamma told me to bring them to you and to kiss you once for her," and how sweetly her pretty lips pouted when she kissed him.

That evening, Mr. Dillion had been fishing, and was on his way back home when he saw Lilian coming on the run toward him. The day had been bright, but the luster of the heavens now was giving way to the pale, pearl-like gray tint that stretched across the heavens, "folding up as in a mantle" all the luxuries of the glorious setting sun. The elusive odors and delicate chill of coming nightfall floated gently over the summit of a high distant peak. The melancholy calm of the closing day rendered the hour a holy one.

Lilian met her father near the valley, and there was a frightened expression in her eyes.

"O father!" she exclaimed, "there is a poor, tired woman weeping by the Habakkuk gate!"

"Why, child! who could it be?? Who has ever wandered to this secluded place? It surely is some one who has lost her way."

"Come on, father!" she urged as she pulled him along. "Poor woman, she is in distress!"

He followed his daughter around the fence to the beautiful white Habakkuk gate, where they found the woman bowed in sorrow and weariness —a lost being! She did not notice their quiet approach, but sat still, with her face buried in her hands. Now and then a half-suppressed sob escaped her lips. The chill breezes danced and flitted in frolicsome fun among the ruffles of her garments. The distant wild echoes of the turbulent mountain wilderness came through the dark, thick forest and rifted rocks as if they were the broken melodies of the ancient mythical Amphion with his wonderful lyre marshalling the spirit anthems of the universe and bringing stones together and forming the walls of another Thebes.

Mr. Dillion and his daughter looked upon the woman with pity, hearing the groans and murmurings that fell from her lips. Lilian advanced toward her, and, kneeling beside her, looked up into the woman's pale face and asked in that low, clear voice:—

"Dear friend, are you lost?" The silence gathered her words, and a hush fell over all again. Tears gathered in Lilian's eyes. She put her warm little hands up to the woman's face, and

once more came the accents of her soft voice:—

"Are you lost?"

The woman looked up as if from a delirious dream. Mr. Dillion took her offered hand and assisted her to rise. A grateful spirit shone from her pensive eyes as she said simply and sweetly: "I thank you both."

As she looked down upon the child before her, she started back and gazed silently at her; then, as a smile stole through her tears, she took her in her arms and said in a solemn, low, weird tone: "Darling, I am lost."

"Well, come with father and me," requested Lilian, "and you will feel happy in our home; you are not lost now."

She took the woman by the hand to lead her into the house, but the woman hesitated.

"No, I am lost!" she said bitterly. "Lost—lost—lost! I must journey on a little while longer. My journey will soon be over. Soon I will reach the other shore. Oh, there I shall find Jesus and there I shall patiently wait for my darling—" she could say no more. She leaned her head against the gate and wept bitterly. The gentle breezes carried the echoes, shifted them through the rocks and cliffs, then carried them away into the bosom of silence.

She was about to fall, when Mr. Dillion took her upon his arm and led her into the house.

She found herself upon a beautiful sofa in the corridor, where the cool, nocturnal breezes drifted through. Lilian took a goblet of wine, and touched it to the exhausted woman's lips. The gentleness of her action and attitude awakened

in the eyes of the lonely woman a faint glow of tenderness as she quaffed the delicious wine Lilian responded with a beautiful smile in which a thousand radiant lights seemed to dance and sparkle.

The night was tranquil, and the strange woman rested in peaceful slumber the whole night through. A while before day she awoke and looked out through the window. The moon had long since journeyed down through the western trees toward the horizon; great fleecy clouds lingered like myriads of suspended pearls beneath it; and the whispering breezes whispered a melody of peace. As she looked out through the silent night, she felt that no one else was awake. The lonely Venus shone in the eastern skies like a haughty sentinel guarding the fortresses of heaven's eternally hidden wealth of unknown worlds. A fleecy fleet sailed along the skies, stealing away the faint light of the lonely planet, which now and then re-appeared dimly through the thinner portions of the vapor.

While the lonely woman gazed long and steadily at these far-away movements of the universe, a peculiar illustration suggested itself to her mind. Like the lonely star, her early life had shone with the light of usefulness on the early dawn of youth's horizon. But a shadowy cloud had drawn its gloom across her life like the vapor that hid the star, and since, while the star of her life was as pure and bright as it ever was, its brightness only once in a while shone through the shadow.

At last the morning came, and the glorious

dawn of the eastern light half-circled over the eastern hills. She gazed at the pageant of the morning sun and all its pure, beautiful surroundings with an ardent, rapt expression in her pure, bright eyes.

She was much revived. She rose, raised her window to catch the first breath of the wild mountain breezes as they swept down the slopes bearing the odors of wild ferns and flowers. She looked down the southeastern slope of the mountain, where a narrow valley lay, as if it were a mirror, reflecting all the glory of the morning dawn. Down before her, spread out like an emblem of Paradise, was the menagerie of animals, and she gazed with a girlish fancy and admiration at them. Some of them were wading the first and freshest dews of the morning; some were still sleeping in the soft-lawned meadow; and some were gleefully playing about the meandering brook that ran across the meadow.

She leaned further out to inhale the fresh mountain breezes, where her attention was caught by the sight of a pretty cluster of morning-glories that entwined themselves gracefully about the wires that supported them. The beautiful blossoms turned their smiling faces up to her with the dewdrops lurking in their calm depths. Now and then the breezes would touch them and claim a number of them to shower over those blossoms waiting below.

She heard the cooing of a dove far down the glade, and the melodies of the happy birds proclaimed to her the awakening of a happy morning. A feeling of momentary bliss seemed to

form a halo of love and glory about her, and for that blissful moment, she forgot all her troubles. Had she waked, as did the sleeping Original in primitive days, to find an Eden round about her?

As she gazed upon these luxuries of nature, soft, quick footsteps were heard ascending the staircase. Then came a gentle tap upon the door. She admitted the person; and when the door opened, Lilian stood in its way, with a look half-radiant with a smile and half-wistful with anxiety on her face.

"Good morning!" greeted Lilian.

"Good morning!" responded the woman, who stood aside to admit her.

"Well! Well! How much revied you seem this morning!" Lilian ejaculated; then, with that sweet tone and low accent in her voice, she asked:

"Are you still lost?"

There was something in the tone and manner of that little cultured girl that strangely impressed the woman, and the simple question—how full of meaning!—sank deep in her heart.

"Yes, child, I am lost!" she answered sadly. "I could not tell you where I am. I have been gazing out over the beauties of this home, its pretty gardens, lawns, animals, its beautiful white fences and gates; I watched the glory of the eastern dawn, and it seemed to me as if my mind drifted into the realms of imagination, that I could see the fabled Argonauts sailing across the ethereal seas of heavenly gold yonder on their way to Colchis in the ship Argo to gather the golden fleece of the deep dawn. I felt happy then, but

now, I remember that I am lost. I don't know where I am, nor where I am going. Oh, how hard!"

She buried her face in her hands and wept bitterly. Lilian stood by her in silence for a moment, then put her little hand upon the woman's arm.

"But the lost is found. You may stay with us as long as you wish to. I know that father will be glad for you to remain with us. He will do anything that I ask him to do if I ask him to do anything that is right. Will you stay?"

The woman looked mournfully at the smiling face of the child, then suddenly a bright smile touched her features, only to be overshadowed by a painful agony, which gathered over her brow and darkened in her eyes. Oh, how sweet was the face of the pretty child before. Yet it brought a sad memory to her recollection. Something in that face made her think of one man she knew so well—whom she loved. But now he was far away, perhaps in eternity. Often in the sweet days gone by, she had looked into two brave, passionate eyes, like those in whose languid depths she now gazed.

The pause had been a long one; and at length Lilian drew near, and throwing her arms about the woman's neck, she kissed her and whispered:

"Please do not look so sad."

After a pause she continued: "Father will grow impatient; let us hurry down to breakfast. It is waiting for us; but I am about to be impolite. I forgot to ask your name or to tell you

mine. My name is Lilian Dillion. May I ask yours?"

"My name is Homean."

"You? Mamie Homean? Let me see." She paused a moment.

"I remember a gentleman who used to speak of a girl, Mamie Homean. I believe that he loved her, for he spoke often of her. Where did you live about three years ago?"

"I lived in Tennessee about that time."

"There goes the bell!" interrupted Lilian, and they went down to the morning repast.

Lilian briefly introduced the lady to her father and mother, after which they all disposed of a delicious meal.

Mr. Dillion was a clever observer; and, as he ate his breakfast, seemingly indifferent, his keen, glancing eyes frequently sought the face of the strange visitor, while Mrs. Dillion entertained her by telling her romantic stories of the strange mountain resort. As Mr. Dillion looked at the woman's pensive face, he noticed a faint trace of youth gleaming in her thoughtful eyes and a perpetual smile on her half-parted lips. Although her appearance was that of one who had suffered an age of trouble, to Mr. Dillion, she was merely a girl of about twenty.

He finished his meal, pushed back his plate, and cleared the crumbs from his napkin.

"Miss Homean, you were completely lost, when we found you, were you not?"

"Yes, sir, I was lost, but it mattered not with me then; I had given up to die. My sorrows and griefs were wearing my life away. A few more

hours before I reached that beautiful white gate, I thought I saw a great white spirit hovering over me. One by one all my earthly ties had been severed, and I was homeless, friendless, and oh! so desolate——" She paused to suppress the choking sensation rising in her throat.

Mr. Dillion came to the rescue of such embarrassment as would naturally be felt, and he asked her in a comforting tone:

"You came into the wilds of this mountain to seek the peace and the rest for which your aching heart and weary soul were longing?"

"Yes, sir. I thought that I would live only a little while longer, and the society of the wild mountain birds and sweet, innocent flowers were truer and purer than the cruel world had been. But I was lost."

Mr. Dillion sighed, and turned to his wife.

"Leland said those very words only a few hours before he went away. Poor boy! Poor Leland!

His faltering voice fell like an echoless mournful sound upon the breezes as they swept through the beautiful dining-room.

"Poor Leland!" said Lilian, with tears stealing over her cheeks.

No one saw the expression of anguish that struggled in Mamie's eyes, nor the painful, quick sigh that escaped her lips, as she bit them at the mention of Leland Burnett's name. At last, and so strangely, she had come to the family that had once been associated with the boy she loved so well.

They all arose from the table and repaired to the drawing-room. After a pleasant conversa-

tion, Mamie rose to her feet, though she was very feeble, and said:

"Now I must express my sincere gratitude to you all for your unparalelled hospitality to me. I am sorry to leave such good people, but must be going. I cannot afford to impose upon you by you all for your unparalleled hospitality to me. I know I have a warm, cordial welcome here in this beautiful home, but I must not intrude. There, now, Mrs. Dillion, do not insist on my staying, for I must go."

"Why, you cannot stand it. You must wait till you are stronger!" exclaimed Mrs. Dillion.

Mamie's face grew pale; her body trembled with weakness; and she was compelled to resume her seat. Mrs. Dillion saw her beginning to faint. When she had somewhat revived, Mrs. Dillion carried her back to the little room arranged for her. While she rested on the pretty little bed, Eliza, the hired servant, brought her water when she wanted it, and books to read. Her bed was near the window, and she could see the calm beauty of the rosy dawn. She looked with pleasure at the gorgeous colors that trembled on the waterfall of the little creek as it leaped over the huge boulders some twenty feet high into the boiling foam below. Far up in the stream, as far as the dense foliage of the mountain forest would admit of view, the stream glowed with the reflected hues of the gorgeous colored heavens, as it rushed over rapids, flowed smoothly over little river-plains, and rippled over pebbles. The sound of its music seemed to lull the cool morning into drowsy hush upon which all nature had laid her head and gone to sleep.

A portion of the flower-garden could be seen through another window, and it presented a gorgeous pageant whose characters were a myriad host of blossoms and tendrils standing in the beautiful arena like drooping sentinels resting and nodding in the calm brightness of the sultry sun.

The domestic animals wandered across the meadow, following the dewy shade, and there lay down to instinctive dreams.

The merry laughter and chatter of the little mountain spirit, Lilian, was hushed; and even the merry birds sought the cooler abode of the dark, dense forest; all were quiet.

Mamie looked out upon the beautiful calm quietude with a strange impressiveness fixed in her passionate brown eyes. The quietness seemed to cause her to fall into a restful sleep. The solemnity and the holy calm and repose of nature had sweetly impressed her. The faint breezes that occasionally stole in, as if afraid to disturb the slumberer, brushed across her splendid features, carrying with them the restless, weary look that always haunts the face of the wanderer.

Her sleep was a holy repose; and it was afternoon before she awoke to see Lilian bending over her with a smile in her pretty eyes. She returned the smile; each kissed the other, uniting their love, never to be broken.

"Are you lost?" and Lilian bent low to catch the answer which she scarcely heard. But the smile that lighted up in that woman's face was answer enough for her.

CHAPTER X.

A FORTNIGHT passed. Mamie soon recovered, and was soon familiar with the surroundings, customs and seclusiveness of the beautiful "Gethsemane" home; and her acquaintance with the Dillions was fast ripening into a pleasant intimacy.

Mamie had decided many times since her recovery to resume her strange wanderings, but Mrs. Dillion's motherly tenderness and wise suggestions prevailed upon her to stay with them. She promised to stay only an indefinite length of time, reserving the privilege of going away when she thought best. Another condition required of them was that they would not accept her as an equal member of the family, but allow her to engage in the domestic service of the place. Mrs. Dillion could hardly agree to this, as she could see no reason for it.

"What, then, shall I do to reciprocate the favors that I shall receive from your kindness in permitting me to have a peaceful home with you?"

"I shall engage you as governess, to teach Lilian —my little angel of 'Gethsemane,'—and to be with her as a companion in all her wanderings over these mountains. She has a peculiar desire to wan-

der among the cliffs and along the streams of these mountains. Would you accept even as noble a work as that?"

"I am so young, Mrs. Dillion, and I have never engaged in any such service, but if you are willing to trust your child to my care, I shall, with God's help, render myself worthy of the trust you place in me."

There was a pleasant expression on her face as she spoke these words. To be the little girl's governess, and to be constantly associated with her, was more happiness than she had anticipated. However great was the work for so inexperienced a governess as she was, she was glad that the sweet, innocent child would be her *protégée and* companion.

"It is fortunate that you have come to our house; we tried to engage a governess in Washington, but no one would agree to come so far away. I am so glad to have you even as governess if you will——"

"I suppose you understand, Mrs. Dillion, that my services are free? I shall accept no compensation for my work."

"Why, Miss Homean, I intend to pay you customary wages at least."

"Pray do not insist, Mrs. Dillion. It will only terminate in a controversy in which I shall persist to the very last." She laughed.

"Well, we will decide about that another time," said Mrs. Dillion, good-humoredly.

Mrs. Dillion absented herself from the room to answer a call, and Mamie was left alone in the beautiful drawing-room.

Presently she looked up from her meditative attitude, and noticed a richly-bound book lying on the center-table. Taking it up she noticed it to be a treatise on the "Origin of Man"—a work in Evolution. She had always eagerly accepted every source of information, and of course she was soon lost in the perusal of its deep thoughts and strong logic. Though it seemed skeptical in the extreme, she clung to it as though she were studying the dreamy legends of Greek and Roman mythology, which she had always delighted to read.

As she bent over the book, oblivious to everything around her, she suddenly became aware of a strangeness creeping, as it were, through the silent room. For the first time, a faint idea of superstition came into her mind. She looked and listened. Though perfect silence reigned, she seemed to feel the presence of some recently-entered something. Aroused to curiosity, she took the lamp and proceeded to make a quiet search. As she passed around the room, the lamp-light flashed over the tall, glistening, fluted column, and she noticed a strange, unknown inscription, beautifully engraved upon it. She made a close inspection of all the surroundings. The walls glared before the light, and showed the Saracenic paintings upon it. Here and there hung large pictures of savage combats and horrible, bloody affrays; a crimson silk flag with a heavy fringe of gold surmounted with a gold disk with the name "NOD" in it hung among the gentle breezes. Rich hangings gently swayed from their dignity-crowned heights; and around the beautiful Cor-

inthian column, whose fluted exterior grinned with paralelled channels of pearl, and from the gloomy arches and walls, all moving as if beckoning the silence to draw near. There was something grand in the architecture and skilful furnishings of the beautiful drawing-room. Yet Mamie shuddered, with a cold chill creeping over her person, as she replaced the lamp on the table.

Mamie extinguished the light and emerged from the room, closed the door, and stood for a moment in the narrow-vaulted passage leading to the particular suite of rooms.

Above her, sweeping across the narrow passage, hung beautiful rich curtains that glistened with ten thousand tints of gold and diamonds. The single swinging lamp emitted a gloomy light, yet sufficient to reveal the luster of these various-colored curtains and their ornaments. She had never visited this apartment of the grand mansion, and she stood for several minutes, silently admiring it.

She then passed across the passage and approached the partly open door of still another apartment. Pushing the door open, she entered what seemed to her to be the abode of perpetual light. Her eyes were dazzled by its extreme brilliancy. She found herself standing on the floor of a grand rotunda. It was magnificent! Only the celebrated rotunda at Rome surpassed it in grandeur.

She walked timidly across the floor to fountain that ejected a silver spray against the concave of a clear glass globe that fitted tightly over it. This was a marvel in beauty to look upon. She

watched the water gather again into a clouded marble basin, from which it was conducted by a crystal glass tube running down to the floor and along till it reached the reservoir whence it came. This fountain was immediately under the great dome, and near it stood a billiard table with amethystine garnishings, while on the other side stood a finely sculptured white marble table, inlaid with gems of aqua-marine beryl. On it, heaped up in profusion, was a collection of sea-shell, and these caught Mamie's attention.

While she examined them she discovered an extra large shell, which she found upon examination to have a miniature gold cavity inlaid, and a red onyx lid whose exterior surface grinned with the basso-relievo of Nero falling upon his sword. A very small aperture, faced with polished ivory, was evidence that it was a lid locked over a golden shrine. She turned it back and forth, scrutinizing it from every relief to every shadowy crevice. As she looked at it, she noticed an inscription on it. Along the pink concave of the shell-wing were these words in basso-relievo:

"A VAGABOND OF NOD."

She looked again and again at the exquisite construction of the novel ornament. She shook the shell, thinking that perhaps it would shake open the lid, but she failed. Then she proceeded to try a small key, which she had suspended around her neck. There was a dull click, and instantly the lid flew open. There! What could it be? Could it be possible!—that her own like-

ness looked at her from a miniature photo lying near the top of the small shrine? Yes, it was a small photo—of her own likeness! But how came these strange, secluded people with her picture?

She removed the little picture, and under it, in the bottom of the shell-shrine, lay a small golden locket with a tiny golden chain coiled gracefully about it. By close inspection, she found it to be the very fac-simile of the one Leland had given her. Somewhere in her wanderings she had lost the one Leland had given her, and the sight of this little golden shrine brought back to her the painful memories of a time never to be again.

Dashing away a single tear that had stolen down her pale cheeks she replaced everything, and locked the little shrine, then went quietly back into the narrow passage to the stairway that led to her bed-chamber.

On the following morning, Lilian came running along the piazza to Mamie, who was reclining in a large arm-chair; and, throwing her arms about Mamie's neck, she kissed her as a morning salutation.

"You must come with me on a morning ramble this morning," she said, smiling. "I want to be your pilot and show you the wonders of this great mountain. We must gather the pretty wild roses and pansies and many other pretty flowers that adorn the hills and valleys of this strange recluse. Will you go?"

"Oh, yes, I am to be your——"

"Oh, yes, I know!" cried the girl, jumping up and down, and clapping her hands in glee. "I know it all! Mamma has told me. Oh, isn't it

delightful to think that you are my governess and that we shall be together all the time? Come! let's go out among the flowers while they are fresh. Oh, the mountain is such a cool place among its dark, shaggy rocks and bluffs and narrow valleys!"

In a short time, Lilian and her governess were off toward the huge mountain, where the frowning bluffs grinned through the foliage of the trees and where ten thousand times ten thousand deflecting echoes rebounded from the concave valleys and the convex hillsides.

Soon, they were lost from view as they proceeded up the steep ascents. After some time, they made a toilsome ascent over craggy boulders and slippery rocks and reached the large spring, the source of the brook which meandered through the "Gethsemane" menagerie-meadow. A large vault, about seven feet by ten, and two feet deep, hewn from the center of a great rock in the cliff, marked the basin of the spring. The water source was from a small cave, and was conducted by a paved channel into the basin. There was not a beaten path about the place. All appeared as though it were an unfrequented, lost, deserted resort of ancient antiquity.

They rested themselves; and, with a small china mug which they had brought along with them, they dipped up the very cold water and quaffed it heartily. Their faces were flushed, owing to the exertion which they had been obliged to undergo, and they bathed their faces in the cool water that rippled in a clear stream from the vault. While they rested, Lilian exclaimed in

perfect delight, as if some pleasant memory had come to her:

"Oh, this is the place where I found a large, beautiful shell one day when I was wandering about over the mountain, and found this beautiful place. I have never told father or mother where I found the shell. I tell you because I love you and because you seem at times to be unhappy, and I want you to feel like you have a trusting friend." She kissed the hand that she fondled, and continued: "I though you would enjoy this beautiful scenery. But as I was going to tell—I was standing near the edge of the vault, looking down into the water, when I caught sight of something like a shell lying on the bottom of the vault. With a crooked stick I managed to fish it out; and what do you reckon it was?" A mischievous sparkle danced in her eyes as she made the playful inquiry.

"You have already told me it was a shell," and Mamie became somewhat flushed at the remembrance of the shell that she had found in the rotunda. Perhaps the little girl knew some mystery of the contents of the shrine.

"Oh, yes, I did! Oh, it had such a pretty little casket fastened in it, with a beautiful red onyx lid on it. It was locked, and we have never been able to unfasten it. I carried it home and placed it with some pretty shells on the table in the rotunda. I will take you in and show them to you when we return."

"Did you say you cannot open it?" asked Mamie eagerly.

"Yes, ma'am."

Mamie laughed. She was much relieved.

After they had rested, they arose and descended into a long, narrow valley that widened as they descended until it spread out into a broad plain, shaded darkly with large spreading trees. Here they came upon a pretty silver-gray fawn standing knee-deep in a clear pool of water. At the sight of them it bounded away, and was soon lost in the dark, silent valley.

They passed on and on till they came to the bend of the creek where it leaped from its smooth valley bed down the rugged mountain. They unfastened a boat there, and entering it, rowed up stream, beguiling the hour by laughing and singing and telling quaint old legendary tales. As they passed on, Lilian, struck by a strange, child-like idea, asked:

"Did you ever think that the little rippling brooks and rivulets laugh to themselves, especially when they are under the shade of a large tree? And the little flowers, they seem to be smiling all the time as they nod among the breezes and upturn their soft petals to the sun? Do they not?"

Mamie smiled. "I think so, dear Lilian. It is pleasant to think they do! I am almost sure that they do."

Lilian smiled and nodded with an air of satisfaction.

"That is right," she observed. "It would never do to leave them to grow without a purpose. And the little streams—they are emblems of happiness. I love the pretty flowers and I love the flowing streams that tumble down the hillsides as if they

are playing like I do sometimes when I am up here by myself."

"Lilian, do you like the mountain life better than city life?" inquired Mamie testily.

"Oh, much better. Here I can have my way. Here my playmates—the pretty flowers, the little white fleecy lambs, and pet fawns—do not hurt my feelings. When they once love me, they love me always." She paused, and lifted up her sweet, pensive eyes to Mamie's and continued in that wild-like, joyous tone:

"And since you have come, I have learned how to love. Do you know that I love you, Mamie? I have always wanted to call you that."

The tears trickled down her cheeks in crystal drops. Mamie did not speak just then, but lifted the child in her arms, strained her to her heart; and for one silent moment one might conjecture that the angels joined in the love-feast of that holy hour. It was a holy silence. One during which the melody of the rippling, gurgling waters murmured in sweet anthems as they unrolled themselves in silvery bands and bright folds along under a deep, green canopy. Then like the stray chime of a lost note returning its harmony, Mamie's voice mingled with the murmuring anthem:

"I have always wanted you to call me Mamie. May God be praised, I have one little friend! And I love you too, Lilian."

At length they reached a landing-place where the creek banks smiled with a few purple-leafed pansies nodding gravely, with that quaint expression of their legendary physiognomy. When

Lilian had stepped out upon the bank, she begun plucking them as if a wild, ecstatic impulse had suddenly seized her. When she had plucked a pretty bouquet, she dipped it into the cold water, lifted it out to see the clear, spherical drops trickling over the leaves and falling back into the water again, and she cried with a joyous laugh:

"See, they do not murmur when I pick them. They know they must die, but they only weep silently like they do now. See the tears falling. But they are glad because they are making me happy. Ah, what true friends!" She pressed them to her lips.

They proceeded to the top of a steep eminence.

Mamie's face lighted up with enthusiasm as she looked out over the vast landscape which spread out below them like the poet's vision in the dreamy, distant haze. They could see the one solitary village about fifteen miles away as it stood in the mystic maze of the distant blue. Far down the mountain side they could see their beautiful home standing like an ancient black and white marble temple buried in the wilds of an unfrequented mountain wilderness. Its glittering spire stood far up in the ethereal depths like a haughty sentinel guarding the fortresses of its wealth and aristocracy. They looked long and earnestly at the enchanting scenes below.

CHAPTER XI.

"FATHER and mother will get impatient about us if we do not hurry back," said Lilian, after a short silence. "I shall tell you more about this strange place when we get home, where you will be better prepared to listen to me."

They left the silent place and went away. They went back to the rock-vaulted spring to rest a while. They were resting and observing the many-colored heavens with silent admiration, when a horse and its rider galloped right up to them. The rider, a man, reined in his horse and scarcely in time to keep him from leaping on them.

"Whoa, here! You damned Canadian!" he yelled in a gruff, angry tone. When the excited animal became quieted, the man put his hand over his eyes to shade them from the sun, while he looked across a ravine as if he were looking for some one. Then suddenly a savage glare leaped into his eyes, and a thickening scowl that bent his brows foreboded that a tempest was raging in his heart. He looked away, then back, uttered a wild mountain halloo that startled Lilian. Then he drew a revolver from his hunting jacket, waved it above his head, then brought it to a level and fired

a six-shot volley almost instantaneously. Lilian screamed, and fell into her governess's arms, and shrieked and screamed and shrieked again.

"My dear sir, please do not do that again," pleaded the governess. "You will surely consider. You will frighten this child into delirium." Her soul pleaded, her eyes pleaded, and her rich voice pleaded; and as the man looked at her more closely, the scowl vanished from his brow, and a tender, penitent look shone there, which Lilian and her governess never forgot.

"You will please pardon me," he requested, kindly. "It could hardly be avoided." He turned, with an uneasy look in the direction in which he had been shooting. He looked long and earnestly, while the original dark scowl drew its dreary, desolate look over his face. At last he turned to them and requested the little mug, that he might get him a drink. They handed it to him; and after he had drunk heartily, and he handed it back to them with an expression of thanks, he hurriedly mounted his horse and used rein, drew his cap over his savage eyes, and rode off a short distance. Suddenly he stopped, turned his horse, and rode back. He looked at them as if endeavoring to trace some recognition of their faces. He would fain have spoken to them, but instead he uttered a few words in a strange tongue to himself. They were frightened, but tried to appear bold and fearless. The stranger noticed this, and a sarcastic smile curled his lips as he bowed low and haughtily and turned away. They noticed the strange pallor that crept from chin to temple over his savage visage. Soon he was far

down the road, and the clatter of the galloping steed's ringing hoofs could be heard far away, commingling with the crowded echoes of the rocks and timbers, and once more the six-shot discharge startled them with the horrible report. When the clattering hoofs could be heard no more, Lilian turned with her startled face to Mamie's, and both spoke simultaneously:

"His face seems familiar."

They passed down the mountain toward home.

That night, after they had retired to rest, Mamie fancied she slept, but she only woke to find it a vain effort. As she lay with closed eyes, the dark figure of a man would appear before her, and she seemed to hear his wild mountain halloo coming through the silence. She did not sleep—she did but ponder.

One morning the governess and her pupil were in the library, studiously engaged in reading.

Just then Mrs. Dillion glided into the room like a haughty princess.

"What do you think, my dear children," she began,—"for children I must call you both;—Mr. Dillion has just received a notice from the owner of this home to vacate it some time in the near future. Then we must go back to our home in Washington."

"Oh, mamma, what are you saying? Surely we cay stay here,—papa can buy it if he will. Oh, how can I leave this beautiful mountain home? Please, mamma, ask papa to buy it!" She entwined her arms about her mother's neck, and pleaded with all the earnestness a child can express.

"Why, darling," said the mother soothingly, "don't cry. You will be happy after you shall have been away from here a while."

"Oh, no, there is no such a place on earth as this one!" She covered her face with her hands, and pressed it against her mother's bosom. "Oh, Mamie!" she cried to her governess, with a half-smothered appeal, "will you still be the true friend you have always been, and ask papa to stay here? Oh, just for my sake, won't you?"

"My dear little trusting friend, I would be glad to do anything for you that is best. I think your mother would be more influential than I could be."

The child made no answer, but wept on, while Mrs. Dillion and the governess engaged in conversation.

"I suppose, Mamie, you are familiar with all the apartments of this building?"

"Most all of them."

"Then, doubtless, you have wondered at the hoary associations connected with the many rooms. You have noticed the combined characteristics of the hoary chambers and the significance of their numerous relics that render them each a specimen of some ancient art gallery."

"Yes, I have rather taken a fancy to them. There are such varied illustrations and suggestions to be drawn from their unique excellency and singularness of antiquity."

"It is all these peculiarities that enhance the novelty of this mountain recluse. The singularities associated with it are very much in keeping with its uniqueness and seclusiveness, I think."

Mamie nodded, and with a strange tone of melancholy in her voice, said: "Yes, I think I should like to live here always,—here all is quiet—all is peace—all is love—all is simple;—nature soothes the aching heart; and:

"' * * for one's gayer hours she speaks.*
She has a voice of gladness and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into one's darker musings with a wild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness ere one is aware.'

I love all the associations of this beautiful home."

"I don't suppose the owner of this valuable property half realized how beautiful, how excellent, his choice of a quiet and secluded resort was till he had accomplished all the plans of this peaceful paradise."

"I am sure he was a lonely man of sorrows; these quiet groves, the still long summer days, the sweet, sweet, soothing voices of nature, and the seclusiveness of this beautiful, enchanting home are the many excellences mingled into one virtue which is the consolation that a dying, hungry soul seeks and craves. No doubt he was sad and weary, and longed for rest and sought peace in this wild mountain wilderness."

"Mamie, you seem so sad at times. If there is any shadow of trouble darkening your life won't you confide your sorrows to me? Perhaps I can help you."

A mist of tears shone in the governess's wist-

ful eyes as she shook her head silently and lifted her hand to enjoin silence.

That night, after the weary hours of study were over, Mamie rose from her desk and left the library just as a little clock in a distant room chimed the lonely hour of midnight. An intense silence brooded over the home.

As she was about to cross the narrow vaulted passage, she paused to look at the grim visage of the woman Thug which grinned hideously from the wall in the distant rotunda. She had just finished the pathetic, tragical story of Heera Lall's daughter Luchmunea, who fell a victim to the woman Thug of India—how the cruel woman strangled the beautiful daughter with a thin cord, then to inflict greater violence she drew the bracelets over her hands and the anklets over her feet; and when she saw that hideous face, she thought of that awful story, and a shudder crept over her.

While she stood there, she heard a quick sound like two billiard balls clashing together. She listened breathlessly a moment; all was silent. She sighed deeply, and just then a quick shadow fell across the ribbon of light which streamed through the partly open door. She held her breath still another moment, but saw not the shadow nor heard the sound again. But, as she was about to turn away, a quick rustling of the rich folds which shrouded a recess in the wall was seen and heard. She saw the flicker of a noctillica, then all was silent again. She was not frightened the least bit, but a feeling of apprehension came over her, and she turned abruptly away to her room with a feeling that confirmed her

former suspicion and superstition. She spent a sleepless night thinking of all the singular experiences that she had undergone during her life, and especially since she had come to that home. She did not believe in ghosts; what could it all have been?

A few weeks later, Lilian and her governess were just returning from an evening stroll, and were entering the Hades Gate, when they looked up suddenly, to see a carriage coming up the road. Some one in the carriage waved a handkerchief for them to wait, which they did, and when the carriage drove up to the gate, the familiar voice of Mr. Dillion greeted them. He was just returning from a hunting trip which had kept him away about two weeks. Lilian hurried to meet him, and throwing her arms about his neck, she welcomed him with a loving kiss.

"Oh, father, I am so glad to see you again! It seems like an age since you went away."

"Yes, darling, it seems like a long time, but the Prodigal hath returned."

He lifted his hat and shook hands with the governess, and after dismissing the driver, turned with them into the house.

Lilian was all joy, and talked and laughed gleefully as they went inn. After a welcome kiss from Mrs. Dillion, he sat down to the supper which had just been prepared. A hearty meal was disposed of, and a draught of wine enlivened his lips and invigorated his person.

"There is no comparison between our wines and those of the grand cañon regions. This wine is so delicious." And Mr. Dillion smacked his lips.

"Was your sport this season as enjoyable and successful as at other times?" asked Mrs. Dillion.

"Oh, our success was abundant, you know," and he laughed.

"Papa, tell us about your hunting, prospecting and so on."

"Well," he began, "I cannot say that I met with anything that very greatly displeased me. However, I saw more of the evil side of the world than on previous tours. Of course I was grieved to see men entangled with the vipers of sin, which coiled about them in their wicked revelries. While I was at the little town of Williams, many nights I have listened to the wicked revelries in the gambling rooms above me. Their excessive hilarity would increase as the night would pass away, till their midnight orgies and habitual excesses would become unbearable. So you see I meant the converse of what I said when I said that I met with nothing that very greatly displeased me."

Lilian laughed.

"Mamma, it would not be like papa if he did not say something backward. I'll venture he can rehearse the Lord's Prayer backward."

"Now, Mr. Dillion, you have pictured to us the dark side; can't you interest us with something beautiful?"

"Oh, certainly," he answered, as he moistened his lips with more wine, "any one blessed with the gift of endurance can make a heaven out of a briar-patch. I saw many things that greatly pleased me. * * * Several of our party had their Bibles along, and every night we engaged

in a beautiful, pleasant devotional service to God. On Sunday we had Sunday-school. After we all separated, one of our party and I went to the noted Pike's Peak. As we ascended, we soon found ourselves in the midst of a tremendous electric shower. The slightest movements of our hands or arms or of a twig would generate a burst of electric showers. It was beautiful to see. From our position, we could see a beautiful landscape. We could see the great plains stretching out before us, dotted here and there with towns and villages and crossed with meandering ribbons of streams as they unrolled their silvery bands along the plains till they faded in the distant haze. So after all, I had a joyful time."

"I'll venture it was pleasant to be at your little Sunday-school," said Lilian carelessly and half to herself, as she looked dreamily away at the afterglow of the sunset.

The breezes crept into the room, bringing with them the odors of the wild flowers and the refreshment of its cooling properties. The day had been extremely hot. But now the slumbering breezes seemed to have awakened from their "flowery beds of ease" among the blossoms, to wind among the drooping tendrils, to fall tenderly upon the withered blossoms, and to sweep through the foliage of the shade-trees with a lively ebb and flow. They came through the open window, murmuring a sweet, gentle carol.

After a short time, the happy group repaired to their respective rooms to rest.

As Mamie went down the narrow corridor to her room, she heard Lilian play a parting lay on

the piano, and as the sweet chimes drifted to her hearing, she murmured:

" O, well for the fortunate soul
Which music's wings unfold,
Stealing away the memory
Of sorrows new and old!"

A strange smile flitted across her pale countenance, and she went on to her room.

CHAPTER XII.

One beautiful midsummer evening, Mamie was alone in the flower-garden. She had just finished hearing her pupil's recitations, and had walked out for a mild exercise in physical culture. While she wandered among the pretty flowers, ambition seized her, and the wonderful inspiration of a divine purpose filled her soul. She had long since discovered her duty, and had endeavored in every way to duly equip herself with a perfect knowledge of personal and social ethics. She had already, to a great extent, formed for herself a course of ethic discourses and lectures, yet she had a more noble, more elevating purpose than this. Her childhood dream had been to live in purely devoted service to God. She had been molested for several years, but now that dream came back with a sweeter inspiration. She wanted to labor for the Master. She hoped some day to outlive the blight of her life, and to do so, it was necessary to endow herself with learning and natural superiority over those who had rejected her. Here, she found a pleasant home, furnished with every advantage requisite to a home-study education. Here she found a crowded library to which she was cordially granted access.

After inhaling the fragrance of the pretty flowers and kissing them good-night, she wandered out through the garden to the house, where she took a seat upon a sofa in a cool, shady place on the piazza. She had procured in the library a copy from the Greek books, and here she spent the quiet late afternoon reading from "Organon of Aristotle." She became deeply absorbed in the philosophic arrangement of it. The skilful arrangement of its body of rules compiled in the book for investigation deeply interested her, and it was growing late in the evening when she closed the volume and rose from her seat. She walked to the opening in the cluster of vines that stretched from column to column along the piazza. Placing her elbows upon the banisters, and resting her face in her hand she looked out upon the beautiful sunset scene.

As the sun went down the polystyle aisles of the grand mountain forest colonnade stretching westward, filled first with a golden haze, then changed to a glaring sea of crimson sunbeams; and only the weird, mournful song of a cooing dove stirred the silence as the breezes whispered a pensive lullaby to the dying day; and as the busy echoes ceased their frolicsome flight and sank to rest in the black solitude of craggy bluffs and crowded forests, the cool night crept like a myriad host of invisible fairies on a soothing mission over the tranquil valley of "Gethsemane."

To one bearing the burden of a shamed life there, perhaps, is a strong suggestiveness in such scenes as Mamie now admired. At least Mamie, though innocent, felt the tide of painful memo-

ries sweeping back over her heart from the blurred and checkered past. A chilly sensation caused her to shudder as she remembered the last time she had ever heard of Leland; how it was that on her return to her boarding-house that evening when she had been to meet Alton Tolliver, Leland had been there and had inquired for her; how it was that he never came back to see her again; how he had ceased to write to her; how it was that she had heard that he had fallen a victim to dissipation in New York because of lost confidence in a "woman who had deceived him"; and how it was that at last she had wandered away from all whom she loved and had gone to New York in search of him that she might rescue him if she could. Then she remembered how hopelessly she had failed to find him and had given him up as lost. But somehow she felt that she had been wrongly informed, and that Leland was yet, if living, the same true, affectionate lover. But it was weakness to brood over the remorse of an unchangeable past. She dashed away the tears from her eyes and turned into the house and went to her room.

Her aspiration was to propagate the religion of her faith. She would endeavor to bury the past forever and begin anew.

She was sitting by her window, looking out at the beautiful dream of night, while in her mind plans were forming and maturing. For hours she sat there, thinking how to begin her new life. At last she rose, paced the floor. Her eyes kindled and her heart throbbed violently as ambition pictured to her a possible glorious future. She must begin humbly, but her work would gradually at-

tain higher and higher to the zenith of fame, and, best of all, to the crowning glory of the Saviour's blessing! The spring-time of her youth had not yet gone, and she could yet accomplish the great purpose of her life. What might not the unrolling years unfold to her? She bowed her head and prayed:

"O, merciful Lord, make me a fit servant of thine. Give me strength to do thy will. Purify my soul, O Lord, and sanctify my heart to thee. 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.' Fill my soul with thy love divine, and help me to trust the precious merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to feel that for his sake our sins are forgiven, and that our souls are blessed. Then save us all at last with all the redeemed of thine. I ask it all in the name of Jesus. Amen."

She did not retire then, but started to a library in an upper chamber to procure a book which she wished to look over before she retired. She had entered the magnificent rotunda on her way. This apartment was aflame with light.

She passed noiselessly over the floor and began to ascend the beautiful spiral staircase which coiled its way to the loftiest apartment in the building. She had never been up this staircase at night, consequently she knew nothing of the novelty of the spectacle such an ascension presented. She paused now and then to look down at the apartment whence she had come. She smiled as she looked down upon ten thousand times ten thousand sparkling reflections and glittering golden knobs and shining pedestals. She

saw the beautiful billiard table, the table of shells, and the fountain globe and its circling pool that shimmered its golden reflections like the wavelets of a golden sea. All this beautiful, still, motionless stereoscopic scene was a suggestion of all that was grand and beautiful. To Mamie they were testimonials of the ancient glory of Solomon's Temple. The brilliant light of the many chandeliers streamed from the luminous centers out upon the silent grandeur of the palace rotunda below, making it a scene of ineffable beauty. As she gazed upon the scene a feeling of enthusiasm seized her. There she saw the beauty of art as she had seen it in nature. She had often thought, —as many fanatics do—that an expenditure of one's wealth in the construction of costly mansions was a wilful, sinful waste and a wicked prodigality. But she could not see it in such an inconsistent way now. Why was it wrong? Was not the building of Babylon, once the grandest ancient city in the world, a vast expenditure of wealth, time and labor? Babylon was once a city wherein the Spirit of Almightly God reigned for a season; and, if its people had not fallen so deeply into sin and dissipation, it would never have fallen a victim to the wrath of God. It was not the grandeur of the city that led them astray, for all that soon lost its charm. It was their wicked desire to live in sinful excesses and heathenish reveling. Again, the temple of Solomon owed its existence to the Divine Will and the command of God, and was it not the grandest building in the world?

No, indeed, there could be no evil in anything

that was beautiful or grand. Every grand edifice is a "Temple of Thought"; every novel display of human skill is a holy, magnificent dream. It is but the development of the progressive mind of man, and there is a grand, holy inspiration in such development.

At length she turned her intent gaze from the brilliant sea below her, and went on to the small library. Here she found a collection of ancient literature. After she had been searching for some time, and as she was about to close a volume she had been reading, she noticed a beautiful card that had fallen from the book upon the floor. She took it up, and after scrutinizing it carefully, she noticed the initials of some one's name beautifully gilded upon it. The letters were C. L. B., and just beneath them, in excellent handwriting, were these words:

The person, of whom these letters are the initials, is an archangel of both ancient and modren infidelity! Beware! The soft sentimental christian who ventures under the tread of his merciless feet! Beware! *C. L. B.*

On the summit of the Ural Mountains, Tiberias, Asia, 18—.

Mamie was puzzled. What strange language. Who could it be? And why should such a card have strayed from Asia to that strange, secluded place? This was another mystery about the home, and it confirmed her superstitious ideas about it. But it was too intricate for her to discern, and after replacing the book, she closed the door of

the library and descended again amid the glory that had previously received her admiring gaze and recognition.

She at last retired to rest. But before she closed her eyes in sleep, she thought of Leland. She fancies that she knew some way by that mysterious power of telepathy that he was still living and that he was living close to Jesus and would some day come to her after all the toil and sorrow and care were past. And with this consolation, she closed her eyes in tranquil sleep.

Ah, poor child of mortality! The sedative voice of the sweetly singing Siren hath lulled thee to sleep under the cruel, yet apparently soothing wave of a seductive influence and deception. Then sleep on, O child of Fate, and snatch from slumber land the passing joys; but awake, O awake, and face the dread catastrophe, for it must surely come!

When Mamie awoke, the sunlight was streaming into her room, and the voices of birds were merry among the trees and flowers. This morning Mr. Dillion and Lilian went to the village on a shopping errand, and Mrs. Dillion and Mamie were left alone with the servants. Mamie spent the forenoon very pleasantly with Mrs. Dillion, and after a hearty dinner was disposed of, she told Mrs. Dillion that she desired to be absent a short while that evening, and soon the little black buggy and black pony were brought around for her.

There was a small settlement of cottagers in the valley just a few miles away, and it was in this vicinity that Mamie purposed to begin her

work. That was her mission this evening. First, she meant to make them a visit.

After a little drive, she was driving through the dreary settlement, and she halted in front of an old time-worn cottage. She went in, and kindly introduced herself to the inmates—only one little girl and her grandmother. To Mamie they presented the appearance of a desolate household. Charity had not frequented the home. Mamie made herself familiar with them at once. She talked to them as friend to friend, entering into their tears and sorrow with sincere sympathy.

"Why do you all live so lonely in this neighborhood?" Mamie asked sympathetically.

"I have lived this way for many lonely years," answered the woman sorrowfully. "Perhaps you do not know the circumstances which brought 'Lonely Vicinity,' our community, to its state of loneliness, desolation and poverty."

"I have never heard."

"Then, I'll briefly tell you. Many years ago, this 'Lonely Vicinity' was a flourishing little town. The old dilapidated church which you passed on your way here was the first building of any consequence which was ever built here. This valley was a beautiful place then, and soon became noted far and wide for its loveliness. Soon settlers from the north and northeast flocked to the garden spot. In a few years, an enterprising, beautiful town had grown up. A strong religious society was organized, and as the little town grew, this wonderful organization developed rapidly. My husband was the pastor of the church before we married, and after we were married, he was

called away on a missionary tour. I went and returned with him. All was happiness, love and peace until a band of ruffians from the mining regions of Nevada came into our little town and began to disturb the peace. They were well educated in all the vices of the age, and of course began to instigate their corrupt manners in the minds and hearts of the good moral young men and boys. They put up saloons and gambling houses and indulged in the most wicked revelries that the mind can imagine. They soon led the young men astray. Then began a terrible reign of horror and bloodshed! Men on horses clanned together and rode through the town, yelling with drunkenness and shooting people down as they went! A shadow of hell hovered over the ruined town. In the midst of it my husband was shot down one night as he was on his way home. I was left alone with my only child, the mother of this child before us. At last many good citizens left the town. Finally, one night, a larger portion of the town was set on fire. Ah, I'll never forget that awful night when I saw and heard women and children screaming and crying for refuge as they ran along the streets homeless and in poverty. Only a few buildings survived the flames, some of which still stand as the old land-marks. The town was never rebuilt. The outlaws vanished; and ever after that the town has been scorned and detested by all the world that knew it. They call it 'Lonely Vicinity.' We who still live here barely subsist on our labor's earnings, and it is always as still and lonely as it is this quiet afternoon."

"I had heard," said Mamie, "about your loneliness and friendlessness, and that is why I came among you. I want to help you all. I love people who are bowed down in sorrow. I love to help them to feel happy. Now you need a Sunday-school and a pastor in this 'Lonely Vicinity.'"

The woman, whose name was Mrs. Harum, looked at her with tears in her eyes, and said:

"God give us back our good old days of Christianity!"

"I have come to organize a Sunday-school, and I want everybody to come together and help me. I have asked the Lord to help us, and He has promised. He will restore this down-cast people again."

She talked a long time with them and when she started away, she was requested cordially to visit them as often as she could.

She made her way to many other lonely homes, and ingratiated herself into their friendship in the same sweet manner. Many of them were homes that were destitute of the comforts and blessings of less needy people. This fact made it a field of duty in which she could labor.

After many visits and hearty invitations for her return, she told them good-by, and returned to her home, a happier girl than she had ever been before. What a joy it was to make some one happy! She was glad to work for the happiness of others.

When she returned to Gethsemane she saw that Lilian had returned and was playing with her pet fawn, her beloved Dongola, and she came nearly

upon them before they were aware of her presence.

"Why, Mamie, where have you been?" exclaimed the girl in glee as she rose and kissed her governess. "Oh, I was so disappointed when I returned and found you gone."

"I have been off on an afternoon drive, and I stayed longer than I intended. I hope you have enjoyed your trip."

"Oh, yes, I enjoyed it very much."

They walked into the house in answer to the silver bell that summoned them to the evening repast.

Mamie made two or three visits to the "Lonely Vicinity" every week, and every Sunday morning the good people met her at the old church and joined in a happy Sunday-school service.

It was a delightful work for Mamie. The world grew brighter about her. New blessings crowded upon her. In fact, in every one she saw a blessing. She could

"So feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is—nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessing."

At the close of the summer, Mr. Dillion began to make arrangements to leave "Gethsemane." He and his wife had decided to spend the winter in

Europe before returning to Washington. Lilian chose to stay with her governess, who was to stay at Gethesmane till the gentleman from the East came over to occupy it, after which she would move to "Lonely Vicinity," close to her work. Lilian agreed to meet her parents in Washington the following spring if they would let her stay at the beautiful home she loved so well.

The day arrived for Mr. Dillion and his wife to take their departure, and with sorrow they bade farewell to their happy mountain home and went away. Little they knew of the eventful chapter that would intervene between their departure and their return.

Lilian and her governess were left to enjoy the pleasures of Gethsemane alone. They beguiled the lonely hours by wandering over the wild, rugged mountains, and in visiting "Lonely Vicinity."

Soon after Mr. and Mrs. Dillion had departed the newcomers made their appearance at Gethsemane. To the surprise of the governess and her *protégée* there were only two of them,—a gentleman and an elderly lady.

Lilian and her governess were standing on the beautiful granite steps when they saw the carriage cross the little brown bridge, and when it arrived at the Hades gate, and the two came into the yard, Mamie smiled dreamily, and murmured to herself, "His walk seems familiar."

The gentleman lifted his hat as he approached the ladies, and stopped and cast a quick glance at them. They slightly drew back as they both recognized the gentleman whom they had met at the

mountain spring. He introduced himself as Mr. Cain, then he acquainted them with his aunt, Mrs. Harwell. Then, pushing his hat back from his scowling brow and haughtily glancing at the gilded letters over the marble archway he curled his lips, turned to the ladies, and pointing his finger at the letters laughed wickedly.

"Gethsemane!" he exclaimed with an oath, "that sounds as if this had been the abode of some insane saint. 'Gethsemane!' indeed. As if that noble character of biblical fiction did really agonize those fabulous drops of blood upon this mock-sacred spot! I'll revise the title of this mansion ere long. So, go into the house, you ladies; I'll return in a short time."

He turned to leave, when Mrs. Harwell detained him.

"Pray, do retract those wicked words of criticism upon the blessed story of our Lord."

She pleaded mornfully, but he pulled away from her, with eyes aflame with wrath, and walked sullenly away.

Mamie and Lilian conducted the lady into the drawing-room, where they spent some time in pleasant conversation. Lilian looked sympathetically at her. Traces of care and anxiety lingered on her features and lurked in her eyes. Although a woman of proud bearing, she had a sad face, upon which no smile ever freely played, and from which a dread, glaring despair and hopelessness gleamed.

"I suppose," began the governess, "you are quite worn out with such a toilsome journey, are you not?"

"Yes, I am surprised at myself that my constitution met all the demands of weariness imposed upon it. I do, indeed, feel very much exhausted."

"I understand you and the gentleman have come all the way from the eastern part of Tiberias."

"Yes, you might say we have come all the way from Nowhere to this place."

"You seem to have a dislike for the place, then?"

"I should think such a novel trip would be delightful," put in Lilian.

"I did enjoy it when we first landed, but I soon grew weary of the strange, dull place. And besides that, it was the purpose of the trip that pained me. Sometimes I would become so low-spirited that the loneliest place to be found was the most consoling and comforting. I remember of once landing in the Loess Beds of the Yellow River, China, and residing there with the pagan natives in their cave-dug homes. Though we had to be very shrewd about intruding upon Chinese soil, we found no difficulty in finding a hearty welcome into their homes. I found great consolation in listening to their legendary narratives and to their stories of the destructive river which they called 'Chinese Sorrow.' Although their homes were wholly rustic, their customs and manners were not altogether so rude. They were neat and intelligent in their way, and exceptionally kind. But finally, all this lost its charm with me, and since then I have been a wanderer, bearing the tortures of a never-ending discontent."

"Well, perhaps the solitude of this place will be more consolatory to you?"

"Oh, I fear not." She shook her head dubiously. "I have lost confidence in the illusive prospects of a brighter future. There is none for me."

She glanced at Lilian, who was gazing at her with tears in her pensive eyes. What did that mean? Sympathy? After many long, weary, friendless years? Those tears were the first tokens of sympathy she had seen in many years. She longed to clasp the child to her heart.

"Miss Homean, I think a short rest would revive me very much. I am unfit to be at all entertaining. If you will show me the place I will go there and rest a short while. If Cain should return while I am asleep, please call me. He may return shortly and he may stay away for weeks yet. He is so strange."

After Mamie had conducted the woman to the bed-chamber, she returned to Lilian and whispered:—

"What shall we do? It is that horrible ruffian!"

"We shall wait awhile."

"Very well."

"But how strange!"

CHAPTER XIII.

MANY days passed by without bringing back the wandering Cain. Mrs. Harwell expected him to return every hour, yet she did not seem to be distressed about his prolonged absence. Mamie observed her composed attitude and wondered why she could rest so calmly, knowing that something was keeping him way. She wanted to ask why he stayed away from her so long without writing, but that repelling hauteur always awed her.

As the time passed away, the governess became an intimate friend of the mistress of the mansion.

One evening Mamie was standing in the shadow of a verbena vine reading a newspaper sheet. It was one of those beautiful evenings which an autumn afternoon had blessed with the tranquillity of a holy calm, in which all nature had drowsily subsided, and into which the sweet summer had poured all her beautiful productions to retreat itself to a more congenial climate. The sun had moved around in its course till now it shot its long-reaching sunbeams up the narrow valley at sunset. Shadows of approaching night were enveloping the lesser hills and drawing their black

curtains over the deep valleys. But the tall mountain east of the house looked as if it were lifting its lofty summit high into the golden realms of a golden universe, which seemed to transfigure it before the less superior peaks. A beautiful transparent sea of sunlight settled over it. One might think that its beauty outrivaled the scene wherein Jason, through the assistance of the celebrated sorceress, Media, secured the Golden Fleece.

Mamie glanced up from her reading to gaze at the glory that crowned the grand old mountain. A single lonely sunbeam lingered on the hill-side, and Mamie thought, from the symbol it suggested, that hopes vanish, like fading sunbeams, though some, like that lingering sunbeam, linger on the bleak, barren side of life, to sustain the weary one. She felt that it was wrong to think of the past, but how could she divert her thoughts when they crowded upon her? She felt that a change, either for good or for bad, was approaching—a change that would require one final, desperate effort, then her destiny would be sealed.

She remained where she was standing until the calm, seductive twilight began to shed its hazy, crepusular light round about her. She sighed deeply, and, as the incoming breezes swept past her, she caught the sound of approaching footsteps. She looked around, and saw a form advancing slowly toward the house. Suddenly it vanished. She waited and listened, but she could hear nothing but the deep, hungry roar of the falls.

As she started to the house she glanced at the paper, and stopped suddenly. She gazed fixedly

at the news-sheet. A wild, hopeless gleam of despair shone in her eyes, and her features grew cold and livid. She looked about her and a deep groan escaped her parched lips. Again she looked at the paper and read:—

THE GAMBLER'S FATE.

Washington, Sept. 5, 18—.—(Special.)—Last night, while indulging in his wicked excesses with his nocturnal fellow-revelers, Leland Burnett was shot down at the pool-table and met his death. He was trying to escape with the money he had lost.

The paper fluttered from her hands, and she threw up her hands and groaned pitifully.

"My God! My God! Have mercy——"

She fell insensible on the ground. She was found and carried into the corridor, where Lilian managed to revive her with applications of ice water. After she had quaffed a glass of wine she was helped to her room, and she soon fell asleep.

But that night she awoke with the pain of a broken heart. She was to blame for Leland's waywardness. For hours she wept and prayed, and wept again. At the dead hour of midnight she fancied she heard the soft tread of some one in the rotunda moving about over the carpeted floor. She could hear no voice, and after a moment the room was silent.

She murmured with a strange pathos in her voice:—

"I shall never see Leland again. Beyond the silent tomb his doom is 'fixed'! He goes down, down,—ah me!—and shall I go to heaven?"

She fell asleep under the influence of the soothing breezes that came in whispering lullabies through the window she had purposely left open.

On the following morning, Mamie was well enough to make her visit to "Lonely Vicinity."

When she arrived at Mrs. Harum's the little granddaughter met her at the gate.

"O Miss Homean, you can't imagine how glad I am to see you! You have been needed so bad ever since you went away. Grandmother has been sick, and she has been crying and saying she wished you would come and comfort her. Oh, she is so lonely. I have been praying for her the best I know how, and that is all I can do."

"God bless you, child; that is the best thing you could have done. It is said that faith can remove mountains, and if you prayed with great faith who can deny that your prayer will be answered?"

The child took Mamie by the hand, and led her into the room where Mrs. Harum lay sick of a fever. The sick woman's face seemed to shine with sudden joy when she saw the governess.

"God bless you!" she said, as she held out her feeble hand for Mamie's grasp. "Oh, you are such a good friend. Have a seat. I am so glad you have come."

"Mrs. Harum, I am very sorry to find you sick. However, I have brought you some nice fruit that you can enjoy eating, if your physical condition will admit of your eating them."

She place a small basket of peaches, grapes and pears upon the table, and took from the basket a small bouquet of flowers fresh from the dewy

flower-garden of Gethsemane, and handed them to the sick woman as a token of their tenderest affections and friendship. The woman took them with an expression of delight on her pale face and inhaled their fagrance.

"The good Lord only knows how thankful I am for these tokens."

After resting awhile, Mamie opened her Bible and began to read to the lonely woman and her little orphan. She began by reading, "Fret not thyself because of evil doers." She read on through that sacred passage, and its inspiration came from her clear voice in rich strains of melody and of spirituality. She read passage after passage to them, and the orphan listened attentively to the beautiful clear accents and perfect articulation. Tears gathered in the child's eyes as the instructor read on and finally her attentiveness linked her soul into the endless chain of love and spirituality that issued from every word of the inspired words that she read. When Mamie ceased reading the little child looked up at her and smiled.

"I can read the precious Book day after day, but, Oh! you read it so sweetly! It touches my very soul, and—I feel so happy. Now let's pray for grandmother, pray for ourselves, pray for everybody."

Then they all bowed in the kneeling attitude of devotion, (and from Mamie's pathetic voice ascended an earnest prayer to God. When they arose the little girl began to sing that sweet hymn, "I know that Jesus loves me, and that's enough for me." Her sweet voice rang like silver chimes, and

as the song continued her face grew brighter, till at last she seized Mamie's hand as though in a state of spiritual ecstasy. Then she ran to her grandmother, and, throwing her arms about her neck, she exclaimed joyfully:—

"Oh! Grandmother! Your little Ella will be good now. God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins and has blessed my soul. Miss Homean, you may be proud that you have been instrumental in bringing one soul to Christ. Oh, how happy I am!"

It was indeed a happy occasion. Mrs. Harum rejoiced that such a tide of religion had flowed through her home, gathering her precious granddaughter in its immaculate stream. Soon afterward she was baptized into the church.

After a pleasant visit to other people of "Lonely Vicinity" Mamie started home, feeling that God had crowned her efforts with wonderful success. What a great opportunity for Christian and philanthropic work? Mamie was sorry for the poor people and rejoiced that she could lend them a helping hand.

Ah, what a boon it is to a sorrow-stricken soul to help others! How true it is that the heart-broken one finds the greatest consolation in the hardest work and in making others happy.

On her way she wept for the poor, ruined soul of Leland. Ah, how bitter was her life after all. She was almost tempted to believe that God was cruel to her.

When she returned to "Gethesmane" there was a great change about the place, which puzzled her. The doors and windows were all closed. A large,

angry dog was chained to a post in the yard. What did all this mean?

She opened the gate quietly, and walked in and up to the granite steps. She heard the excited clatter of voices within. She stopped to listen, but just then the dog gave a fierce howl, and instantly the voices hushed. But quickly the solution came to her. The master of the house had come home and was evidently abusing his aunt about something. And the dog's being tied to the stake confirmed her conjecture; for this must surely be his dog. No considerate gentleman would bring such a dangerous canine into another's yard.

She stepped up under the marble archway and turned the knob. The door opened quietly, and she passed in. Passing the parlor door she saw Mrs. Harwell, who was standing by the high-fluted column, talking in undertones to her nephew, who was standing by the black marble table. His head was inclined, and his hat was drawn down over his eyes. His hand fingered and played through his soft, silky, black beard. Mamie shuddered as she paused and looked at his swarthy features and dejected attitude. She never forgot the gloominess he personified. Mrs. Harwell put her hand upon his arm, and said pleadingly:—

"O Cain, won't you heed me? You know that I am right. And Shakespeare said, 'Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just.'"

Mamie heard these words, and saw his cold, stern, scowling face as he turned his petulant head toward his aunt, but she saw and heard no more. She passed on to her room and sat down to think. The day had been a happy one; she had been in-

strumental in bringing one soul to Christ. But the bright day had been soon darkened by a cloud. She had returned with bright anticipations, but the presence of the cruel master blurred the brightness.

A feeling of apprehension and dread seized her as she thought of having to meet a man who detested the very existence of her sex. She went to her room, arrayed herself in a beautiful evening costume, and waited for the supper call.

She did not have long to wait till the bell rang for supper. Endeavoring to possess herself with fortitude she arose and entered the dining-room, bowed to Mrs. Harwell, who immediately turned to her nephew.

"Miss Homean, allow me to present Mr. Cain."

He was admiring himself before a large mirror, and at the mention of the girl's name he turned his flashing eyes upon her.

"Good evening, Mr. Cain."

"Good evening, stranger."

"Stranger, indeed!" corrected Mrs. Harwell roughly. "Cain, you are extremely rude."

"Well, my most potent kinswoman, I think you might have spared yourself the task of introducing her. Introduce her to me! As if I could not familiarize myself into an intimacy with her if I so desired."

His tone was full of derision; his eyes flashed contempt; his gestures were haughty.

"Cain, you may occupy the position at the head of the table to-night, and if you 'so desire,' as you are pleased to term it, you may occupy that position henceforth."

"I suppose I must be subject to the powers that be," he said sneeringly. "When did you take upon yourself the honor of 'Grave Oracle of "Gethsemane"'?"

"Be seated at the table, Cain."

"I think you had better place your pure and undefiled self at the head of the table, as I do not want to inflict myself with that tri-daily rehearsal of that little, inspired epigram you call 'returning thanks!' You know the one occupying that place is required by orthodox discipline to recite it."

"I think, Cain, we can manage to dispose of this evening repast. We can do so without further discussion, I think."

"Just as you desire, my dear aunt."

They seated themselves at the table and ate in silence. Mamie's sense of dignity had been wounded by his rudeness and she dared not look into his criticising eyes, which, she was certain, were fixed upon her every movement. When they had finished Mr. Cain leaned back. He chuckled as if to himself, and muttered a wild, strange foreign phrase, and began toying with the silver spoon in his plate.

"I suppose I will have to rest contented tonight. I can't go out and enjoy the revelries of a banquet as I have been accustomed to do. I think I shall call Paix immediately to the rotunda, where we can have a few dashes at dice or play billiards."

"Paix! Whom do you call Paix?" inquired Mrs. Harwell.

"Why, he is a little Frenchman whom I met in Paris. You know some Frenchmen like adventure. So I told him of my romantic hermitage

here, and the beauties of its scenery, and he expressed his desire to accompany me. I brought him along with me. I suppose he is in the drawing-room now, or on his way from the village. Oh, he is a commendable Frenchman. You need not be vexed at my bringing him here."

He rose from the table, and, taking a cheroot from his vest pocket, he lit it and passed on into the drawing-room without further explanation to the bewildered ladies.

"It is a peculiar whim of his," said Mrs. Harwell thoughtfully, as she adjusted a broken spray in the bouquet on the table. "Cain is generally different. He has no friends, so he thinks, whom he can trust. He accepts no friendship, and grants none; and I say it is a departure from his regular habits to indulge the friendship of any one —even this foreigner."

"Perhaps," said the governess, "it will soften his heart to have the sympathies of another friend continually touching his few sympathies."

"God grant that such a providential occurrence may bring to pass such a change in his wicked heart."

They rose from the table and went into the drawing-room, where they entertained themselves with an interesting game of whist. They could hear the explosions of laughter and the foreign-phrased exclamations from the gamesters in the rotunda. Lilian absented herself from the drawing-room and stole her way to the dark shadows of the narrow passage, where she could see through the partly open door of the rotunda the hilarious revelers. The little girl turned away from the

sickening scene with a feeling of mingled pity and disgust.

The ladies soon retired, but the revelry continued till the late hour of midnight, when the revelers ceased and staggered off to bed. At last all was silent, and only the extreme stillness seemed to awaken a disturbance of its own silence.

Time passed on without the happening of extraordinary or unusual occurrences. The cold days began to draw nearer and nearer, enveloping the mountains and valleys in the dreary, chilling mists and fogs of wintry gloominess. Day after day the dull routine of life went on. Mamie occasionally met the master of "Gethsemane," perhaps on the veranda or in the narrow passage on his way to his magnificent rotunda. He only slightly bowed to her as he passed, but always his keen, piercing eyes cast their strange, magnetic power upon her at every glance of their mystic brilliancy. She noticed that he was not altogether indifferent toward her.

One cold, clear morning, they were partaking of a delicious, steaming breakfast. Mr. Cain had taken a draught of delicious wine, when he suddenly broke the silence by a cynical laugh, and spoke to Paix, but kept his eyes firmly fixed upon the governess, who sat opposite him. Thus he spoke:—

"Paix, I was reading an account of the death of my old friend, Leland Burnett, the other day. Doubtless he has already greeted the sainted Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the immaculate Christ and so forth,—he was shot down in a gambling hell, you know?"

"Yes, I read it," and the Frenchman laughed cunningly.

Mamie's face grew pale, and she tried not to look at Mr. Cain, but in vain. Her eyes met his, smiling derisively. But as he saw the tears in her eyes, something strangely tender dispelled his scornful visage, and she beheld in his handsome face and strangely brilliant eyes a look of tenderness, which, strange to say, looked restless and pleading. A peculiar feeling stirred in her heart, and she blushed and quickly looked down.

Cain and Paix and Mrs. Harwell talked on, but Mamie was silent. She dared not look at him again, but kept her eyes fixed on the china and on the little bouquet by her plate. What was it that pleadingly appealed to her from his passionate eyes? Something lurked there that she had never seen before. She fancied the answer, and it caused her to smile, but something caused her to shake her head. Then the smile vanished and left her face pale as marble.

When they all arose from the table Mamie went to the library and tried to concentrate her confused mind on the perusal of an ancient narrative. In vain she tried to read understandingly, but all the interesting pages seemed to turn to tables of stone on which might as well have appeared the inscriptions of an unknown language of an extinct and forgotten race.

At last she dropped the book in her lap, and gave herself up entirely to a dream of love,—love for whom?

CHAPTER XIV.

At last she sighed deeply and rising from her chair she started from the room, when she noticed a small copy in beautiful red binding lying upon the table. She looked at it and found it to be a treatise on the unpardonable sin. Like all other lovers of literature she looked to see who the author was. But to her disappointment she saw only a blurred spot where the name had been blotted out.

After the day was passed she went to the library to see and read this little book. It required only the reading of the first few pages to catch her interest in the logical arrangement and eloquent language. Its thoughts led far back into the dim and faded annals of the Quaternary age—the age of man,—and an impressive construction of the theme rendered it a convincing proof and argument! The author dealt with facts from a historical standpoint as well as from a logical view of the question. "The Origin of Man" filled the first few pages of the book, then a gradual development from instinct into reason and natural intuition concluded these pages devoted to the first topic. Then came a series of interrogations concerning the mysterious existence of man. "The

Word was God" was a quotation from the Bible, and the comment upon it was as follows:—

"It is strange how the annals of the Bible have been preserved; but like many other pieces of ancient literature it has been handed down to every succeeding generation, not through that mysterious, mythical power of divine providence, as a greater portion of the world is wont to believe, but by a natural course of events. Of course it is useless to explain why this ancient relic of literature, called the Bible, is not inspired, for it is reasonable to suppose that any rational mind knows that it is not. For even the Bible is clothed in a garb of fiction, assuming characters from the very beginning; such as 'God,' 'Adam,' and 'Eve,' and 'The Devil'; and even the serpent coils itself around the scene or crawls through the thicket of romance; and Eve's seed bruises its head; all this confirms the belief that it was a fictitious composition. It is remarkable that in the Icelandic Bible this little story is told of the origin of man:—

(Icelandic Dialect) "'Og Gud saged, ver vilium gera Mannenn epter mind og liking vorre. Og Gud skapade hann hann, og han skapade thaw parlman og kvimu,' which means, 'And God said, Let us make man in our own image and likeness, and God shaped man after his own image, after God's image shaped he them, and he shaped them male and female.'

"Therefore, it being only an ancient work of fiction, it will be generally conceded that it is only ordinary and not inspired."

Then came the analysis of the erroneous idea of unpardonable sins, and the effort to refute such

proclivities. A continuous flow of logic and eloquence graced the pages, and when Mamie closed the little book the question rose in her mind who this learned author could be. It was true that all the statements contained therein were self-evident, but she did not accept, always, those facts proved by logic; and pushing the polluting volume aside and back into its place she rose, half ashamed that she had read such a book, and retired to rest.

The following day was the Sabbath, and Mamie went to the Sunday-school that she had so successfully organized in the old church. There was a large attendance. Mr. Alfred Butterick, the famous missionary, lectured after the Sunday-school lessons were recited.

She was in deep meditation, and as she was driving down a little rock hill, on her homeward way, Mr. Cain stepped out from a ledge of rocks into the road by the buggy and, bowing stiffly, he asked permission to ride home with her, as it was some distance to "Gethsemane." Of course it was useless to "contrary him," for it would kindle his deep hatred more hotly against her. Therefore she gave him a seat by her in the buggy. But she felt as though she were indulging in an experiment that might be better left undone. To be so closely associated with such a vile man made her shudder, even at the thought of it. And it was strange that he would ask to ride with a member of the sex he despised. She conjectured that he had a motive for such action. They were silent for some time, when Mr. Cain began the conversation:—

"Miss Homean, may I ask where you have been going every Sabbath since I have been here?"

His tone was imperative, and as Mamie looked at him she observed that his face was cold, rigid, desolate, even savage; and a peculiar flame of passion gleamed in his wonderful eyes. Half frightened by his manner she answered confusedly:

"Why, I—I—have meant to——"

"You have meant to deceive me!"

"No, sir, Mr. Cain, I have not! But I shall not tell you of my affairs. I have been engaged in a good work, and I think it is improper for you to question my integrity in such a rude manner."

"Good work, indeed! I guess you have been feeding a bunch of wild swine somewhere on this mountain, have you not?"

"No, sir, I have not been engaged in such a lowly task."

"Well, where do you go?"

"Mr. Cain, I think you had better spare yourself the unnecessary boisterousness you are undergoing, and save your lungs for railing on your high-spirited steed; for you may distinctly understand that I do not purpose to argue with you."

"Ah, Miss Homean, you are of the impression that I am ignorant of your clandestine proceedings. What? And you may be surprised that such knowledge has so mysteriously come to me. And your impetuous, trick-working mind may conjecture that I have a secret communication with these rocks which to you and all others are dumb, and that they have betrayed you to me. No matter. I have learned the secret of your Sabbath escapades. Doubtless you are endeavoring to found a damnable organization called a Church.

Remember the place of your worship is on my premises, and that henceforth I forbid you the further propagation of such an organization. Remember what I have said!"

He looked resolved and malicious as he turned his restless eyes upon her.

"Mr. Cain, I do not think it will necessitate a charging of my memory with that statement. We shall move to a more peaceable place. But I fail to see that your objection is at all founded."

They were silent for several moments. The awful, wicked manner and expression of Cain made Mamie shudder, and a tremor fluttered to her lips. Her hand moved to her heart as if a pain were there.

"No doubt, Miss Homean, you have sized me up as a most daring enemy of your eminent Lord —a branded member of that lawless band that invades all Christendom and bound for the uppermost seat in Hades."

"Oh, no! Mr. Cain, I had not looked at it in such a deplorable way. I hope there is a better future for you."

"Well, my most charitable friend, since you hope so liberally, would you be so kind as to donate to my knowledge-gathering, insatiable treasure-mind the extent of your hopes? Do you believe I am destined to that better future?"

She saw his smile of mockery, but answered calmly:—

"Mr. Cain, this is a delicate question, and it is wicked to tamper with it in such a way. I prefer to change to a pleasanter topic."

"Perhaps it would be advisable to stop with this

one, as we are about home, and about to stop here at this gate."

Amos, the servant, took the horse and buggy in charge, and Mamie and the "Oracle of 'Gethsemane'" walked to the house. Mr. Cain opened the Habakkuk gate; and, after they had passed in, he paused and looked at the artistically crowned and polished knobs on the gate-posts. On their polished spherical exteriors rested, securely fastened, a rectangular prism of zurlite.

"These strange specimens of minerals are signals of existing evil spirits, symbolical of the fictitious prevailing idea, at least. But, according to my notion, they derive their significance from the fiery regious from which they were ejected. Being newly-discovered minerals from Vesuvius, they signify the burning regions from which the devil sends evil spirits to tempt humanity!"

He threw his head back and laughed scornfully. He said in conclusion:

"Such folly! All is a vast infinite sea of dreams! Nothing is everything, and everything is nothing!"

With a low, mirthless laugh, he turned abruptly on his heel, stroking his soft, silky beard with his slender white fingers. The bitter mockery of his words made Mamie shudder, but she listened to him in contemptuous, yet pitying silence. When he joined her on the way to the house she saw a hopeless, savage gleam flashing in his eyes. Indeed, he was supremely intelligent, but how horribly wicked.

When they had entered the house Lilian joined her governess in the library, where she recited a

Scripture lesson. When this was done she handed Mamie a beautiful book of Bible stories and asked her in that tender, pleading tone:—

"Won't you read to me from that book? Your voice is so gentle and sweet—won't you?"

"Yes, darling, I like to please you," and she kissed her pupil.

She opened the book and read the story of Samuel, the story of Joseph's sad boyhood and happy old age, and the beautiful story of Jesus. When she closed the book she saw Lilian gazing at her with tears in her eyes.

"It makes me think of Mr. Leland Burnett when I hear you read, Mamie. He used to read those stories to me so often. You read just like he did —as if your very soul were filled with God's love."

Mamie inclined her head to meet the upturned face of her pupil, and kissed it. A strange, pensive, shadowy smile settled on her beautiful but sad face. She did not speak.

The evening was beautiful, lovely; the balm of a bright day was in the atmosphere, and the smile of God rested upon the landscape. But this was only one day beautiful amid weeks of winter gloominess. The long, dreary cold winter lingered over the great mountains and valleys like a grim spectre of desolation.

Lilian sat by the fire in the library one cold day, watching the snowflakes falling thick and fast over the craggy bluffs and frowning rocks, the barren trees, the hillsides and the valleys. She was thinking of her mother in the far East. She was wondering if that mother ever thought of her little daughter back at the old home they once loved

so well. A painful sigh escaped her lips. She was still alone in this library, and the monotonous popping and crackling of the fire, together with the incessant ticking of the clock on the mantel made her loneliness more lonely. Outside not a breeze disturbed the soft downpour of the snow as it fell velvet-sandled over the barren land.

She heard the footsteps of some one descending the spiral staircase in the adjoining room in the adjoining rotunda, and before she was even aware of any one's presence two cold but soft white hands were clasped to her cheeks and a voice in a tender tone spoke:—

"Guess who it is?"

"Well, I guess it is Mr. Cain," she said gleefully.

Cain removed his hands and took a seat opposite her.

"Lilian, why have you preferred studying alone to-day? I have looked everywhere for you, but never thought of finding you here."

"Why, Mr. Cain, you know once in a while we all want to be alone because we are unfit to be entertaining. I was thinking of mother and wondering if she still loves me?"

A pallor swept from tempt to forehead across his brow, and a cold smile parted his lips.

"No doubt, then, I am intruding."

"No! no! Mr. Cain, you are welcome. Perhaps it will tend to divert my thoughts to those less sad."

"Would you like to see your mother?"

"Very much."

He looked tenderly at the beautiful girl for a moment.

"I understand your mother is not living?" said Lilian at length. Mr. Cain again smiled.

"No, my mother is living still; but she thinks I am dead."

"Poor woman!" said Lilian, tenderly, "how happy she would be if you would go to her and tell her, 'Mamma, here is your lost boy.' Why don't you make her happy that way?"

Mr. Cain shook his head in silence. The tender expression died away in his eyes, and the savage gleam flashed back a thousand fiery demons. Lilian's eyes fell under the keen flash of his merciless eyes.

"Lilian," he began after a moment's silence, "I came here to reveal a profound secret to you. Follow me, and I shall take you into that silent, mysterious chamber which, no doubt, has excited your curiosity."

Lilian hesitated a moment, but remembering the obstinacy and sensitiveness of his cynical nature she dared not resist. She rose and timidly followed him. But he was mistaken, she did not even know of any mysterious chamber. And she was curious to know just what he could have meant.

He led the wondering girl through the doorway into the rotunda across the floor, and paused to listen. All was silent. He took a small key from his pocket and put it into the door lock. Then, turning to Lilian, he said:—

"Will you promise that you will never tell what you are about to see and hear?"

Lilian drew back from him in amazement and with fear.

"O, Mr. Cain, I do not want to go in there! Please do not take me into that place! I am afraid, and besides, I do not want to be burdened with the secret."

"Do not be frightened, my little bird."

Cain's strong arm held her tightly while he looked full into her eyes.

"Do you promise?"

"I promise," she said, whereupon the little lock clicked and a beautiful door swung noiselessly back on its hinges. Once in he shut the door and locked it. Lilian, seeing the folly of further resistance, became perfectly obedient.

Then, like the shadows of intruding ghosts, they slowly and silently walked down a narrow avenue, whose snow-white polished marble walls were draped with purple, red and white silk hangings. Thick carpet on the narrow paved floor rendered their footsteps noiseless as their slippered feet sank into its pliable texture. Lilian's heart beat wildly. At the termination of the narrow passage they came to a heavy iron door. Mr. Cain stopped to listen again; then removing the heavy cross-bar he opened the door. This admitted to view a spacious room, all elaborately furnished, into which they descended by a long flight of stairs. Its single row of columns stood unfluted, unadorned but magnificent, white, polished and large through the center of the room. Between them were suspended thin granite slabs on which were the gilded words, "Life or Death!" Mr. Cain looked up at these solemn declarations and a death-like pallor crept

across his face; his teeth became set and his fingers clinched as if some half-hidden conscience had awakened in his soul, goading him to frenzy. But his strong nature surged furiously from that sea of conscious agony, and soon he was himself again. Lilian could have screamed with fear, but she dared not disturb the silence which seemed to be under his magnetic power.

At the further extremity hung rich cream-colored satin curtains stretching across some recess as if it were shrouding some captured mythological deity's dungeon. They walked noiselessly across to the place, and again parted the thick folds of the curtains and stepped into the chamber.

On a small couch a man was reclining, evidently asleep. His features were pale, his form slender, and from the line he marked on his couch one would think him about six feet tall. Cain put his hand out to wake the man, and Lilian shuddered and clung to him. Cain touched the man gently, but spoke in a low, gruff tone:

"Arise! Mine ancient enemy of the soul!"

The man bounded up like a suddenly awakened somnambulist from a dreaming escapade.

"Hades,—and devils! Skeptics, all mingled in one mixture of heavenly deities—er—a—why —why—Cain! Why, I hardly expected you at this hour!"

He turned his closed fists back and forth in his sleepy eyes with an energetic reviving intent.

"Mr. Mathes, I have come to introduce to you a pretty little girl, an inmate of my home. This is Mr. Mathes, Miss Dillion."

They bowed stiffly.

"Now, Mr. Mathes, I demand of you a promise that you will never tell that you have met this girl."

"I promise," was the petulant, weary answer.

"I have brought this child in here for the sole reason of making her acquainted with its solemnity. According -to -the tradition -orthodoxy of her ancestry she is wont to cling to their faith and doctrine."

Mr. Mathes bowed gravely in endorsement of Mr. Cain's sarcasm. Mr. Cain laughed wickedly at the cowering man.

"I believe," said Mr. Cain, derisively, "that if I were to tell you that the sun had ceased to emit its natural spectrum of light and that its effulgence was only an incomplete spectrum of blue and green, you would believe me. Nevertheless, we have called to see you, and the moment of parting is at hand. We must take your silence for granted that it is a token of yours, 'Depart, I know ye not?' Well, *au revoir!*"

They returned to the rotunda.

"Now," said Mr. Cain, "I will give you a short history of this gentleman. He was once regarded as a strong and influential advocate of infidelity and many other skeptical doctrines. By fraudulent proceedings he managed to secure seven million dollars to which I was legal heir. He perpetrated this theft by plausibly and satisfactorily establishing himself in my place. He suddenly disappeared after he had gotten my legacy. I chanced to overhear his conversation one night while he was plotting with his fellow-villains to

make a certain robbery of a bank. In that conversation I learned that I was the legal heir to the seven million dollars and that through his skilful scheming he had managed to secure it. I heard him say that he had saved every dollar of it and carried it with him everywhere he went in the form of national currency. He chuckled heartily over his success and boasted how long it had been since he had done the work, and how he did it, and his fellow-thieves laughed and joked. After they had dispersed, I followed my enemy to a convenient place, then I stepped up before him, threw my revolver in his face and demanded the seven million dollars and his surrender. He cowardly granted both. I captured him in the city of Rome, placed him in a private prison there and left him there and came to America with my aunt, found this place and located here. I went back to the ancient yet ever new Orient. When I got tired of wandering I went back to Rome, got my prisoner and came back here and placed him within the confines of that mysterious chamber one night when the valley of 'Gethsemane' was sunk in the depths of dream's deepest stillness. And may the punishment of imprisonment be meted out to him till he is fully repentant."

"O, Mr. Cain, how awfully wicked he was, and how cruel you have been! It would have been so noble in you to have forgiven him after you had gotten your money."

For the first time the girl defied his stony gaze.

"Forgive! Indeed!" he muttered. "Why could not the high priest's servant have been forgiven by St. Peter before the impulsive disciple smote his

ear off? Ah, Forgive!—it isn't human to forgive. 'Forgive' is an obsolete word in the modren vocabulary and should be transferred to the Lexicon of Obselescents."

Lilian made no answer, but treated his sarcasm with her effective silence.

"Now, Lilian, you have promised to keep this secret. But I didn't trust you; I only meant to——"

"You meant to try me!" she said petulantly, rising to her feet with an indignant air. "It is dishonorable in the extreme for any gentleman to trifle with a little girl's curiosity for the sole purpose of gratifying his own selfish desire to justly distrust and detest the gentler sex. But to invalidate your argument that the term forgiveness is obsolete, I rise from my little throne of feminine felicity and superiority and look down upon you and most earnestly and sincerely forgive you the insult. Good day."

"I am grieved at the necessity of detaining you a moment. Now I ask no display of your feminine deception. Forgive! As if such could exist in the hearts of depraved human beings. But I trust that this interview will not relinquish our friendship?" He smiled. Lilian looked at his radiant face, and suddenly a thrilling sensation caused her to recognize a pleasant magnetic personality in him. His eyes bespoke something of tenderness and through them a hungry soul looked despairingly and pleadingly at her. Her eyes fell and her face flushed.

"Mr. Cain, we remain friends, but I do trust that we will have no more such painful interviews. I must go."

CHAPTER XV.

LILIAN entertained suspicious ideas concerning the presence of the wiry litttle Frenchman in the home. She did not know how to decipher the expressions in his sparkling eyes; and the cautious, restrained tone of his voice sometimes almost betrayed him.

Paix, as he was called, was short, slight and wiry, by no means ungraceful figure. He had the highest type of Parisian manners, and one listened studiously but attentively to his purely French phrases. He was full of restless movement—a natural pantomimist in gesture. A brief autobiography told that he was the spoiled son of an eminent and rich French banker, and such being his unfortunate allotment he was left destitute of employment, to drink of every cup of enjoyment, which he did without regarding the future.

But the child was perplexed about his presence there. Mr. Cain had always despised all manifestations of friendship, and had come to this secluded place to evade all possible contact with "hypocritical friends," but he seemed strangely partial toward his friend Paix.

Paix was exceedingly kind to Mrs. Harwell. He

proffered his services to her in many ways—even condescending to sway his shapely form under the swing of a wood-ax, chopping wood for her fireplace.

One cold evening, the household had gathered around the festal board. Mr. Cain seemed silent and troubled; a perpetual frown was on his brow, and his eyes rarely wandered from his plate. When he had finished his meal he pushed back his plate with a sneer, and ventured to speak:—

"I see they have debarred a recently-elected Senator from Utah from entering upon his official duties because he is labeled with the accursed title of a Mormon,—as if his religious proclivities rendered him any the less qualified to enter the gallery of the Senate and take his oath. It is all bosh—this thing, Christianity—there is no unity in the organization. Each denomination is striving like athletic contestants to suppress the others. I am exceedingly amused at the tit-for-tat games these religious sects play upon the vast arena of religious speculations."

"I hope, Mr. Cain," said the governess in an offended manner, "that your amusement will not be so excessive as to injure your vital powers. Be careful; you might overtax your vitality by such tremendous amusement—that coveted sensation which affords that pleasurable occupation of the senses."

"I would permit you to share the amusement with me had I the least idea that you could appreciate the fun. But since you have been so charitable in your advice concerning the dangers of excessive fun, I have the speedy opportunity to show

my spirit of charity; therefore, fearing that your vital powers and especially your weak feminine intellect are not prepared to undergo the tortures of the amusements you convey, I cautiously withhold the 'Higher Amusement.'"

"Thanks for your kindness concerning the preservation of my health, for it is a very valuable property of mine. You have a wonderful knowledge of Hygiene, I must admit."

Cain was silent, regarding her face and words as if amused. At length he rose from the table, drew a Honolulu from his hunting-vest pocket, lit it, and stood for a moment gazing at the lamplight, while the pale blue tendrils of smoke swept in fanciful curls about his nostrils.

"A fairy goddess from Hades," he began, "has commissioned me to be about my master's business. I am to set about erecting a huge temple in honor of Ariadne, that famous daughter of Minos, king of Crete, who loved Theseus, and gave him the clew of thread which guided him out of the labyrinth of Crete."

He laughed, and turning abruptly to the door, said as he went: "*Candida pax* be with you till the aurora of the morn shall again dawn!"

The twilight had gone, and the cold wind whistled in dreary tones about the house. There was no moon, not even a star to dispel the darkness outside.

The governess had repaired to the library, and was reading the Bible, when Cain entered the room to get a book. Noticing her complete oblivion to all things save the perusal of the sacred pages he ventured close to her. This unusual

act on his part aroused her curiosity. She looked up as he stood by her with his cold, glittering eyes fixed on her features. She dreaded his gaze, but her eyes met his bravely, defiantly. He stopped and quickly took her book from her and placing it under his arm he laughed, not mirthfully, but scornfully.

"It is an imperative rule of mine," he said haughtily, "that all such ancient blasphemy as this book shall be destroyed."

He turned to the fire, but kept his keen eyes fixed upon her face.

"And I further demand a promise of you," he went on, "from your pure and undefiled lips, that you will never bring another one of these profane volumes into my home."

He waited; she made no answer, but a flash of profound indignation burned in her face and blazed in her eyes. The silence made him furious, and he gave vent to his anger by cursing and stamping his foot, yet Mamie remained silent, indignant, defiant.

He laid the book upon the table, and came close to her once more, stooping to observe her eyes more closely—just as he would his vicious canine had it wilfully disobeyed his orders.

"You offer no flag of truce! Ah, beware the day when it will be too late!"

She reached for the book, but he snatched it away from her, muttering an oath.

"How dare you defy me, the master of this house!" he stormed out. "Be careful; do not tread on graves that are liable to fall through with you!"

"So long as you stay away from me, Mr. Cain, I shall have no cause to defy you. You should not coax me across graves that fall through, if you are so interested in my safety."

"My! My! Miss Homean, a painter desiring a perfect representation of anger from which to draw would never find a more fit specimen than you in your present state of rage."

Then he stood before the roaring fire, with the sacred volume in both hands raised above his head, while he pronounced its doom:—

"O ye most polluted, damnable anarchist of all peaceful spirits! Thine end is come! I hold you aloft and commit thee to thine everlasting doom —the doom of Nadab and Abihu, whom ye say were devoured with fire from God. Thou reignest no more in 'Gethsemane'! Ashes to ashes I commit——"

His hands were descending with it to the flames when Mamie sprang at him and snatched it away. She seized the book and seized and struggled with all her might, which was much when she was so angry. But he held it firm in his grasp. In her desperate effort he held her from him with one strong hand and a thousand blazes seemed to flash in his brilliant eyes as he gazed with astonishment at her. Instantly, but too late, Mamie thought of her neglect to reflect, and her eyes for an instant fell. Her face was white, and she trembled in his grasp.

"Mr. Cain, you are possessed of devils—Oh, pardon me!—I—you are most heartless to destroy that most sacred book—the only book of your God!"

Her voice fairly shook with anger.

"Madam, you surely are possessed of devils yourself! you dare to interfere with me—*you*!"

"But, Mr. Cain, it is so sinful in you. I did not mean to interfere as an antagonist. I only hoped to rescue the book that you might have time to retract your sinful purpose." He took the book in his hand and looked at her for a moment thoughtfully, then replaced it on the table and came close to her again. He towered above her some inches, and as she stood trembling like a deer at bay and hiding her face in her palms, he tenderly but firmly held them down and looked into her frightened yet defiant face. He read there a complicated display of repugnance, defiance and detestation. He read all her aversion in her eyes which strove to avoid his. He smiled grimly, took her by the arm and replaced her in the large willow reclining chair. Then he took the holy volume from the table and restored it to her and slowly sauntered from the room.

Mamie remained where he left her, and for hours she meditated over the strange scene in the library. She was baffled and confused. Just why this man put himself in her way, then sought to discourage and shame her, she knew not.

It was the hour of midnight when the clock struck the time and Mamie at last aroused herself from the long meditative stupor. She sighed, and just as she was about to extinguish the light she heard Mr. Cain's returning footsteps. She paused a moment. She brushed away the tears from her eyes, and knelt by her chair. Why was her petition for that wicked Mr. Cain? Her prayer was a

low sweet murmur. It could scarcely be heard outside of the room. When she closed by saying: "Lord Jesus, be merciful to me and save him!" and rose, she heard a groan and swift steps echoing drearily through the shadowy corridor.

Winter began to retreat; spring began to pluck her glory from the sunlit skies; and a warm sun turned snow and ice and stillness into green meadows, sweet flowers and jubilees.

"Sparkling like a diamond
Beams the day-star in the skies;
Nature loosed from winter's bond,
Smiles as one in sweet surprise;
Hawthorns wear their wedding white,
Pastures show their greenest guise,—
Earth is laughing with delight."

The Sunday-school society moved their place of worship to a little school-house near the stream that leaped down the mountain. Since Mr. Cain had forbidden their worship on his premises they meekly obeyed and were careful not to trespass. They regarded him as a heartless anarchist to all Christendom—a merciless tyrant.

Being opposed to all Christian worship, and a hopeless skeptic, Mr. Cain might be compared to the ancient Nero, who delighted to see the nations cower at the power of his majesty. Like Nero, he had no sympathy, and rejoiced at its destruction. He was so high-minded and haughty that he never stooped, except in cases of necessity, to destroy the organization he detested. Once he ventured to give one hint as to the cause of his opposition to

Christianity and his aversion for the gentler sex. He said:—

"Christianity led me to destruction, hurled me under its feet, trampled me in the dust, and would not dare to lift me up. Christianity is a fatuity.

"As to the opposite sex, they are the most corrupt creatures in creation. A siren goddess of this feminine realm infatuated me once, enticed me into that fabulous sea of love, hurled my frail bark into her arms, and left me to go down, down, down. Women are the devil's angels and love is a flaunting lie! I wish to live only long enough to see women and Christianity both conquered!"

* * * * * * *

The Temple of Ariadne was building. On the beautiful grassy eminence overlooking the lake south of Gethsemane its large foundation was laid. With the exception of a few men from the village who helped occasionally to hoist the heavier pieces there were just two men who worked hard and constantly at it. Strange to say, these two men were Mr. Cain and his friend Paix. Day after day they hauled timber, glass, granite, marble, and so forth, from the village depot, and stacked it on the Temple yard. These two gentlemen ceased their drinking carousals at night and worked hard.

Mrs. Harwell noticed the change that had taken place in her nephew. It seemed so strange that Mr. Cain would work so hard night nda day at the construction of the Temple, when he was financially able to hire it done over and over again without the slightest inconvenience. There was

certainly a motive in it, or he would not act in this way.

One beautiful afternoon Mamie was writing a letter to Mrs. Dillion, and when she had finished it she put it in her apron pocket. She looked out through the library window at the glimmering radiations of solar effulgence, where ten thousand ether-winged lights flooded the space, mingling together and forming one grand scene of afternoon beauty.

She beheld the deep-green southern valley enwrapt in this maze of light. A mocking-bird twittered among the branches of a tall spreading maple, piping his clear contralto to the voices of nature. This tranquil sea of sunlight that stood over the deep valley, and the thrilling melody of the mocking-bird chanting his praises to the beauties of creation, filled Mamie with a fantastic desire to steal out into the deep solitudes of the valley. She took a copy of Fitzgerald's "Sunset Views" from the case, and started there, humming an Italian love-song as she went. On her way, her thoughts traveled back to the sweet days of childhood and the banks of the Cumberland far away.

Many a beautiful afternoon like this she had prattled on the lawn before the old Tennessee home and laughed at the receding glory of the sunset and laughed and screamed to the singing birds above her head. She lived over again the old happy days of chilhood. All that had ever made her happy came back to her now in sweetest memories and gladdened her heart. But quickly a wave of sadness submerged all that she

had entertained beautiful. It swept down upon her with the swirling memories of that scene which closed the sweet days of her childhood. Her little hand went to her throat to ease the choking sensation that always came there when bitter memories tortured her. Tears filled her eyes, and she groaned once pitifully.

She hurried on down into the valley. She heard a voice in the distance. She stopped to listen. It was a masculine voice, singing. On it came, a chanting melody she did not know. Melancholy, pathos and sadness mingled a thousand echoing voices into one pathetic strain. She listened with lips apart and eyes partly dimmed with tears.

Suddenly the voice ceased, and Mamie walked on, with her head bowed in serious reflection. As she walked along, a detaining hand was laid upon her arm, and a voice in tenderest tones rang softly in her ear:

"My darling!"

She turned, half frightened, to see Mr. Cain standing over her. At first his face was all aglow with delight, but soon a scowl was frowning there. He spoke again:

"What nymph has lured you out at this late hour of the day?"

"I am going to rest here a little while and watch the sun set. But, Mr. Cain, you are rather early coming from your work,—why?"

"The effect of drowsiness secreted my arteries and pervaded my nervous system and—well, in fact, I became lazy!" He paused and looked at the book in her hand, then continued: "The prominent purpose of your retreat to these soli-

tudes is to read that infernal book. It is strange that you never read both sides of this great speculative doctrine—Infidelity as well as Christanity. Why don't you read Dante, Voltaire, Robert G. Ingersoll, Hobbs, Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, etc.? Then you would not be so engrossed with the cheap trash that treats of your damnable organizations. The aroma that leadens the air with fragrance, probably entices you here to dream over these ethnological speculations and foolish ancient farces. 'Dream,'" he mused to himself. "Ah! yes! I would fain lay me down in this quiet valley and dream my life away till, like the fabled Narcissus, there would be only a flower instead, typical of my last long resting-place."

He took her by the hand, led her to a pretty grassy knoll, seated her there like an object of scrutiny, then folded his arms, and looked down upon her.

"O child, your life has been one long dream of peace, broken, perhaps, by an interval of tortured conscience. Once I dreamed too, but my charming goddess of youth, Hebe, eluded me, and in my distorted state of mind, after having awakened from my sweet youthful dream, I was attacked by the inevitable Lachesis, and since then I have been only a victim of the Fates. I have longed for one sweet dream, but—Alas! Even in dissipation I hoped to dream. Perhaps the drunken victims of strong drink find a solace in the delirious dreams that enshroud them in their slumbers, but not I. That weird master of the English tongue, Thomas DeQuincey, has a passage in his 'Confessions of an Opium-Eater' which I memorized while sitting

at the grand Amphitheatre of the decaying Coliseum in Rome, and I have tried to conceive of the solace its semblance even would bring me, but all in vain. He says, 'The machinery for dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing. That faculty, in alliance with the mysteries of darkness, is the one great tube through which man communicates with the shadow; and the dreaming organ, in connection with the heart, the eye and the ear, composes the magnificent apparatus which forces the infinite into the chambers of the human brain, and throws dark reflections from eternities below all life upon the mirrors of the sleeping mind.'"

"And, as this author says," Mamie held up the book, "'He might as truly have said in dreams bright reflections from eternities above all sentious life are thrown upon the mirrors of the sleeping mind.'"

She raised her face, which she had concealed in her hands while she spoke these words.

"Why, child, what have you been crying about? Are you troubled?"

Stray tears lingered on the silken lashes, and a wonderful luster shone from her eyes as she lifted them to his bent over her.

"Mr. Cain, did I hear you singing a while ago?"

He laughed mockingly. "Did you ever hear anything musical come from the lips of a cynic? There is about as much music about me as there is about an old, time-worn, plantation scarecrow that stands out in space, majestically silent and haughty as the lonely Neptune. Yes, you heard me singing; but that isn't the question. 'Render

unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's.' Will you be so kind as to tell me what is your opinion of me?"

"Mr. Cain, we have lived very peaceably heretofore; pray do not seek to arouse controversy with me now. So far as you are concerned, it matters not if I regard you as I would an African Carnivora, or as the tenderest plant in my flower-garden. I think, since we are of such diversity of opinions, our interviews should be brief, if at all. Good-by."

"I am grieved at the thought of detaining you, Miss Homean, but I prefer your remaining here a little while longer. Do you think I am happy?"

A pearly shell-cloud glided over the sun, and for a moment the contrast of the shadow with the sunset lustre rendered the blue spectrum of the pretty, deep valley more intense.

Mamie did not answer, and there was a long silence.

CHAPTER XVI.

At length Mamie looked up at Mr. Cain. The cold glare of his magnetic eyes had vanished and a tender light shone there; a hopeless dying appeal pleaded there, betokening the fall of a proud spirit. He waited for an answer; his face rigid, his eyes pleading.

"Do you think I am happy?" His voice was strange,—deep,—husky, and his lips fluttered.

"It is the best policy, Mr. Cain, to be candid when the truth is exacted of us—you are unhappy! You will never be happy again until you loose that tightening coil of skepticism that is strangling your soul. You are an infidel, Mr. Cain, and know the pain that tortures your soul, and you are the only one who can remove it. It is foolish for a sensible man to succumb to such destruction of his soul."

"Miss Homean, it is a matter of no importance about my soul; for when death comes the terminus of existence is complete."

"Indeed! It is not! The term existence itself signifies 'from everlasting to everlasting.' Existence is co-extensive with eternity. 'We *have* existed, we *are* existing, and we *shall* exist.' Of Eternity our souls were born and unto Eternity shall we return."

"Time and again I have heard such declarations. I have wondered at the mere conception of an Eternity. Were it possible that an Eternity exists, what is it for? It can claim no inheritance; nothing can claim it as an inheritance. If it be it is as empty as it was created to be."

"Oh, Mr. Cain, please do not talk to me that way! I point you to the 'Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.' His cross I will follow, His cause I shall plead."

"Your saintly spirit rises in a kind of righteous indignation to abhor the truth that hurts it. I would warn you against all forms of deception. Do not allow yourself to be entrapped in the snares of the false doctrine to which you allude. Of course you have too much sense to believe the story of Eden and of the Immaculate Conception and the story of the Resurrection and so forth."

"Mr. Cain, aside from your offensive and ostentatious denial of Revelation you are intellectual; but I must say you are deficient there."

"Ah, child, you are blinded as I once was. Just reason. Can the rational man possibly believe that which he cannot understand?"

"Mr. Cain, you say you believe in no hereafter; what is death?"

" 'Death is a leap into the dark.' "

"You are probably an agnostic, then, also?"

"I am, indeed. I do not deny that there must be some first great cause, but I am refused all information relating to it; therefore I simply bow to the inevitable and hold that, if immortality is the destiny of man his fitness for that new life must be attained by a blameless life here. I

accept the teachings of Evolution as being accountable for animal and human life, but I can not explain the existence of the heavenly bodies in their spheres because I do not know. Only a short time ago I would have declared by all the pagan gods that were ever imagined that there was no immortality; but now, I do not wholly reject the doctrine of immortality. On the contrary, I would almost feign hope for immortality, but ah, the disappointments I have suffered have taught me to entertain no new promises. Friendship is a mockery, Love is a curse, and all existence is merely a flaunting lie! All that remains of good is its name."

Mamie looked tenderly into his darkening countenance and asked gently and sweetly:

"Mr. Cain, did you never think how something sometimes whispers in your soul of an immortality? Oh, you cannot deny the inspiration that has, on some eventful moment, filled your heart.

"'A solemn murmur in the soul
Tells of a world to be
As travelers hear the billows roll
Before they reach the sea.'

"Oh, Mr. Cain, you denounce the precious Bible—you say it is an ancient fable We will assume for the sake of explanation that it is a fable; the Christian civilization is the grandest the world has ever known; it is the protection of the purity, chastity and sanctity of the home, of law and order in the community, and of the supremacy of government. It has brought man-

kind to a higher plane of living than all other agencies combined. But it is not a fable. It is the purest volume of history, romance, poetry and law in the world. It contains the beautiful stories that generations after generations from ages and ages back have loved and read, and yet it is as new and true as it was when God first breathed his divine inspiration within its sacred pages. If we are true and loyal to his great cause we will all learn that there is a blessing in such disappointment as you mention.

"'All that we have willed, or hoped or dreamed of
good shall exist;
Not its semblance but itself;
No beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives
for the melodist
When Eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

"'The high that proved too high the heroic for
earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself
in the skies,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the
bard;
Enough that he heard it once: We shall hear it
by and by.'"

When she ceased to speak a half suppressed groan escaped his lips; he leaned his head against a tree by him and she noticed his strong frame slightly quiver. Just how long he remained thus she knew not, but finally when he raised his face

a despairing scowl darkened it and frenzy shone in his eyes.

The sun had taken unto himself all his glory and a beautiful twilight brooded over the valley.

Mamie turned toward the house and soon he was by her side.

The dusky fresco of gloaming slowly sank into the bosom of a charming cloudless night. A smiling moon ventured to peep over the hill top as if spying the landscape to see if "all's well," then, after an apparent brief stop it rode full-orbed out upon the evening skies.

They walked on up the path in silence and beneath a clear moonlit sky. The beautiful globular satellite draped the boundless universe with her silver light and spread a mantel before their feet.

When they stepped upon the veranda she could see his face by the light from the bay-window and for the first time she saw tears trickling down his cheeks. His teeth chattered as he ventured to bid her good-night. He opened the door for her, then turned, jumped from the veranda to the ground, and yelled that strange mountain halloo as he went.

Mamie ran to her little room on the second floor and sat down by the little open window. The low murmur of the falls drifted to her in enchanting symphonies and the breezes sang their sweet carol as they toyed with the foliage of the tall trees and fanned her feverish face.

It was here she tried to forget the handsome face that looked at her in the valley. It was here she struggled to master her heart and dethrone the

intruding king that had enthroned himself there. She brought to bear all her deep-seated aversion for the man who had wilfully and maliciously scorned her sex and wounded her pride. She hated herself one minute then pitied herself the next. Why should she seek to screen the sins of his black wicked past? What voice was it that tried to tell her he was not so callous and wicked as he seemed? She buried her face in her hands.

* * * * * * *

Mr. Cain sat under the shade of a tree in the center of the flower-garden reading from his favorite Dante. As he sat reading of the Garisenda to which Dante makes reference in his "Inferno," comparing the giant who stoops to seize him and Virgil to the tower at a time when it was cloud-capped, a soft strain of music sounded and drifted across the garden to him. Lilian had taken her seat at the piano and had begun to play softly. As she played on she began to sing the beautiful Italian love-song which she had quite often heard her governess sing and play. Like rare anthems snatched from a new heaven they fell upon his ear in rapturous swells, and he succumbed to the power of its enchantment, dropping his book listlessly on the ground. He had heard the carol sung by an opera singer in Genoa, Italy, but the soul was not entangled in the melody as it was in this to which he now listened. His almost petrified heart began to soften, and soon he forgot all his wicked obstinacy in his enthusiasm. He looked back to the happy days when such music inspired his soul with noble thoughts and mingled with the love he cherished

for his darling. And as he thus ruminated there came to him, in faint swells of music, the old, old story wafted to him on love-laden breezes; and as that story rippled from the trembling lips of music he fancied he could hear the gentle beating of her and his heart beating time to the melody of their souls. He was lulled by its charms. "Music can noble thoughts impart, and manage all men."

He drew nearer to the window through which the music flowed and peeping through the cream lace curtains, which stirred now and then as the breezes swayed them, he beheld the glory of her face upturned toward God. The sentiment of the melody leaped from her glory-lit face and smiled from the mirror of her lovely eyes as the music sped away. Tears were trickling down her cheeks, still she sang.

When the piece was finished she dashed the stray tears away; then her nimble fingers leaped ecstatically over the keys, producing the thrilling waltz, "Echoes from the South."

Again Cain remembered the beautiful girl of German nobility who played this waltz on the eve of their bethrothal, while he stood by her and praised her proficiency. Well he remembered the evening when he stood with her in the moonlight that streamed in through the grand colonnade of the B—— Palace in Paris and there won her tender affections, then cruelly deserted her forever. Conscience arrayed itself before his guilty soul to do battle and for the first time since he crushed the fair Lily of Germany he tasted the

bitter dregs of remorse. Conscience struggled and his burdened heart strove to conquer it.

The chords trembled; the bass notes thundered and the music glided away into a sweet carol-like symphony of "Break the News to Mother."

Cain yielded himself entirely and truning quickly he entered the cool darkened drawing-room, took up his mandolin and joined in the harmony. Lilian looked up at him and smiled.

From "Love's Awakening Waltz" to "Leonie, Queen of My Heart," they glided into the pathos of "I've Just Come Back to Say Good-By." And when the last pathetic strain had flown away to join the silence, Lilian turned upon Mr. Cain and smiled dreamily. There was a hushed pause and they drank each other's gaze.

"I am surprised that you can play any kind of instrumental music at all, Mr. Cain. You have never played since you have been here; and you are so accomplished with the mandolin. Why can't you accompany me often when I play?"

"I can play only when the music is in my heart. Perhaps when the last gentle note of this music ceases to echo in my heart it may never be revived again. Something sounded sweet at the door of my blackened soul when your voice thrilled with its grand music and I hearkened to its call. I came forth from the deep tomb of my sleeping oblivion and ventured once more to touch the cup of new life to my lips and taste the love I once worshipped. Now, since I have come into this beautiful realm and tasted the sweets of paradise, I must retreat and wander back to the dark

sepulchre of my buried youth and again roll the stone over it to remain forever. Good-by."

He dropped the instrument on the sofa and was about to depart.

"Pray do not go yet, Mr. Cain, till you have accompanied me in a parting lay."

Her smile drew him back; he took up the instrument again. She turned to the piano again and sounded a soft dreamy prelude. Then began:

"Shall we gather at the river
Where bright angel's feet have trod,
With its crystal tides forever
Flowing by the throne of God?"

Cain hesitated, looked toward the floor with a scowl creeping over his brow. Lilian noticed this and smiled as he looked up at her. He could not resist the purity, the power of that smile. He bowed his head, touched the strings, and lo! the sweetest anthems ever heard filled the air with their grand music.

At the sounding of the last note Cain threw his mandolin upon the sofa, gathered the child in his arms, kissed her sweet lips, and slowly walked from the room.

Love conquered the child and she marveled at the strange sensation that stirred in her heart. Her affections for that wicked man were too strong to be doubted. She looked at his handsome form walking down the path toward the fountain and involuntarily she murmured in dreamy child-like simplicity: "He is mine."

CHAPTER XVII.

LILIAN and her governess arranged to take a morning ramble.

They went to the large spring.

"Lilian, it was here we first saw the grim Master of 'Gethsemane.' Do you remember?"

"I shall never forget," was the low mournful answer. She paused a moment, then continued: "It is a pity that such a powerful intellectual man has wasted his wonderful talent in excessive vice and an unhappy life. Oh, I would give half the world if he were a Christian man. Will you pray for him? I love him, and it will break my heart if he dies in sin. Will you pray?"

"Dear Lilian, I have prayed for him when only the silent stars beheld my devotional attitude; I have prayed for him during the busy hours of the day; my life is one long endless prayer for him."

"Oh, I know he will be saved then. God will hear your intercessory prayers, for you are always so full of faith. I trust he will be rescued from the clutches of his awful wretched life and at last be brought back to Jesus."

Mamie's face shadowed. Her little pupil said that she loved that scornful wicked man. But why should she care? She hated her weak

cowardly self. She was humilated at the thought that she could no longer control her wayward restless heart.

They left the spring and returned to "Gethsemane."

That evening after Lilian's recitation was heard she and her governess walked out through the dusky gardens and lawns plucking blossoms and admiring their beauty and loveliness. Lilian called Donnie, who came leaping to her across the meadow.

"O Donnie, will you always love me?" She put her little dimpled snow-white arms around the fawn's gray velvety neck.

"Yes, always. Donnie came to me from the wild mountains and he is going with me back to Washington."

Donnie's velvety eyes turned pleasingly and looked as if he recognized the meaning of her words.

"By-by, Donnie, I will come with Cecil and bring you some milk, and some hay to make your bed." The pet galloped away to join the other deer that grazed in the frescades of the spreading trees.

The governess and her pupil walked down to the little brown bridge and stood on it looking down into the water while Lilian threw little bits of bread down to the swans that swam about in the clear smooth water like a harbored fleet. Now and then her clear voice would burst out into gleeful laughter as a fish would swim to the surface and devour a stray crumb.

"Some day before I go away, Lilian, we must

take a boat ride on this beautiful stream. It will be perfectly delightful."

Lilian laughed with hearty anticipation, and they returned to the mansion.

As they walked along the path, the evening sun swept its slanting rays across hills and above darkening valleys. The bleating lambs uttered their pitiful cries; the proud peacocks piped their shrill fifes down in the glade and Mamie's beautiful albatross stood sulkily on one foot by the door touching his snow-white down with lubricating properties.

Mr. Cain had returned early from his work and as Mamie entered the corridor the breath of fresh cigar smoke slightly strangled her, and she knew that he was there. She reluctantly went to the partly open door of the rotunda and peeped in. He was gently swaying himself back and forth in the large armchair. She knocked on the door for admittance.

"Come in!" he growled.

"Would you regard me as encroaching should I enter?" she asked.

"You may come in if you will!" was the impatient answer.

She opened the door and stepped in. But his rudeness caused her to turn away.

"Pray do not go yet." She stopped. "You will some day pardon me for having detained you as I have. Take this chair."

She took the proffered chair and sat opposite him.

"Mamie, you have been such a devoted little saint, holding to the principles of truth, forgive-

ness, faith and trust. I have never found you inconsistent one time. Now, child, I trust to your truthfulness and integrity this moment. Oh, do not shatter my weak confidence. Can you truthfully say that there is not one spark of hatred in your heart for me? Forgiveness! Ah, remember, be cautious; for on one thing, one slender thread, hangs the eternal destiny of a human soul.

"Through all the cycles of time there have been some outcast wanderers on the desert of a bleak ice-bound zone of skepticism and unbelief, who have continuously sought the fabulous Klondyke that they never found but plunged into an abyss of ruin. Oh, why is it that conscience, which has been dead so long, rises and comes forth from its gloomy sepulchre to stand like a grim spectre at the façade of its own dreary tomb where it burned to ashes in its youth? The strongest will can not confine it there; the blackest crime can not kill it forever.

"There is some mystery about this great world of humanity. Why is it that civilized humanity has adopted the Bible as its guide? Why is it that only a few have rejected it? And why is it that mankind in one great phalanx have learned to believe that which they cannot understand? Why are Bob Ingersoll and his followers scoffed at and ridiculed to scorn?"

His eyes were full of desolation and his voice was tired and far away.

"Mr. Cain, it is because Ingersoll and his followers can see only intellectually and logically, while all Christian people see both spiritually and intellectually. Hear the Word of God which

says, 'It is the spirit that quickeneth . . . ., the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.' It is true that God has spoken to us in a mysterious way through the sacred inspiration of His Word, but He has never failed to fulfil His glorious promises laid down in that sacred Book. It is, indeed, very foolish to trifle with His grand plan, His holy work. He has said that it is not given unto all men to know the mysteries of His Kingdom. We can come to Him only through the medium of the Spirit, for He is a Spirit. The nearest approach to a perfect knowledge of the Bible is through that precious exhortation which says: 'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.' You have read in the great Book where the Spirit of God speaks through the prophet Esaias, saying: 'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and ye shall see and not perceive.' Mr. Cain, you cannot denounce the inspiration of God's Book through the merits of its inconsistency; for I have completely proven that it is absolutely consistent; and I warn you, do not tamper with Him who is all holiness, love and mercy and wisdom; who is all-powerful, omnipotent, and a mystery to man."

Her solemn words were clear and firm in accents, and she looked upon him as though she were one who had the ascribed dignity of "one speaking with authority." Her fine eyes sparkled in the light of the chandeliers which Cecil had just lit, and her beautiful face glowed with the lustre of inspiration.

Like a captured infidel who had run ashore with his argument, Cain had nothing more to say.

He was simply silent. He could not refute Mamie's argument, neither would he submit to its truth. He only looked vacantly and despairingly at the beautiful girl before him.

Mamie drew a quick breath and rose from her chair.

"Mr. Cain, I am unwell, I must go."

She started for the door, but he caught her back.

"Tell me, dear Mamie, do you hate me?"

She could not bear his gaze. She tried to escape, but he held her tight, pressing her hands in his strong grasp.

"Ah, child," he said, "you cannot trust yourself to look at me. You refuse to speak because you cannot tell a falsehood and will not admit the truth. You are too proud to admit it.

"Now, dear child, hear me. He who seeks to end life's misery by ending his existence is destined to eternal hell, is he not? Is even the attempt an unpardonable sin?"

He fixed his cold, searching eyes upon her pale face, but she continued to avoid his magnetic eyes, while she answered:

"The act, of course, is unpardonable; the attempt can be redeemed."

"Were you ever guilty of the 'attempt'?"

She caught her breath. Too well she remembered when she left a home to face a cruel world in behalf of Leland Burnett. For it was she who stood on the cliff, looked down into the muddy water below, and with a cry sprang. But little she knew who it was who had caught her that gloomy morning and drew her back. She only

remembered standing there struggling with the evil spirit that decoyed to her from the deep hungry water below, of springing from the bluff, of an unseen hand catching her back and of seeing a disguised figure of a woman walk away through the mist and fog. Ah, the ghastly memory of such a premeditated suicide!

"Mr. Cain," she said in a tremulous voice, "you will please let me go, I am ill."

"Ah, yes, Mamie, I am ill too; in the same sense that you are ill. I have suffered death after death for these long torturing years. You do not give answer to my question, but I know it all too well!"

He threw his proud head back and laughed triumphantly.

"And you cannot say that you hate me and yet you will not admit that you like me. Once you detested me; you do not now. Once I was a devil and my very sight provoked the wrath of Jove on your brow; now I am a king enthroned in your heart, and I, though vile I may be, am the supreme object of your daily worship. Ah, Mamie, you tremble at what you term the awful truth. You hate me, you love me; you distrust me, yet you cling to me! Mamie, darling, I know that the Christ you love seems merciful and just to you—if there be a Christ. I know that the life you live in the realms of your holy religion is sweet to you; but to me it proved to be a most cruel and treacherous life, and long ago I fled from it. I know that you have friends whom you say you can trust—you say they are tender-hearted; but long ago the beautiful temple of my

untainted youth, in which I worshipped the integrity of mankind and paid homage to the beautiful life of my kind in whom my pure young heart trusted with pure fidelity, went down under the terrible crash of lost confidence, and it crumbled to dust. It was then that the tightening coil of that serpent strangled my young heart to death. Those friends who worshipped therein with me turned to demons. Now I believe, I know that the hearts of men and women are as pitiless as that of the Egyptian marble Harpocrates resting on that table there." He paused a moment.

"And I awake from my dark sequestered corner and through the gloom of this dreary life I see you verging on the very edge of that yawning abyss over which I was plunged. I see that same fickle Eros that led me over the precipice, leading you along the way; and I, though pitiless I may seem, come forth and put out a warning hand to rescue you. Oh, Mamie, child, do not trust the fair promises of life nor the fatuity of your hopes! Oh, child, do as I did. Flee from the treachery of that human nature of which you speak so reverently and tenderly. Anarchists are hidden about in an ambuscade with their chiseled tomahawks ready to scalp you ere you tread the extremities of life's uneven journey. Some day mankind will reject you with disdain and, My God! how bitter is the cup which I have drunk from the dregs of lost confidence! Oh, child, take heed from a man who has proven the cruel world!"

The mournful tone of his voice calmed to purest

tenderness and it touched her heart till she felt the tears rising as she responded in a low uncertain tone:

"Mr. Cain, I asked you once to withhold the painful discussion of such subjects as are not pleasant to us. Because this world is not made up of the immaculate personages of seraphim and cherubim, the personification of the purest celestial hierarchy, is no reason that it is a vast Hades of such 'faithless traitorous monsters as Ezzolino and the Viscount,' who have disgraced our race with the stain of Humanity's blood. Remember, O remember, that the sins of wicked men never are so great but that our Saviour can redeem the sinful one. O for my sake, Mr. Cain, come back to Jesus!"

He loosed her hands instantly, drew a quick breath, and staggered to his chair, where he seated himself and bowed his head in silence.

Mamie looked at him a moment, then left him alone.

For the first time in years his heart was stirred deeply and he wept like a passionate child. At last he looked up, took the pretty vaulted shell, opened it and looked long and wistfully at the beautiful face of *her* photo. He at last closed it, and rising with a despairing agony on his face, his mournful voice went up hopeless:

"Oh, horrible memories, depart! I am lost! I am lost!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

"LONELY VICINITY" had become a noted place under the leadership of the angel who had come to minister unto its people. The Sunday-school flourished more and more at every meeting.

Mamie rejoiced and praised God that He had blessed her feeble efforts with such abundant success. Human nature would confer the honor of such holy work upon its wonderful leader, but Mamie always closed her prayers with the beautiful humble offer: "All the praise shall be thine, most holy and divine Lord."

Meantime the grand Temple in the mountain was completed. The mystery of its existence and purpose awed all who came near it. Many were the unanswered inquiries made by the villagers who had begun to frequently pass through the "Gethsemane" premises, concerning the magnificent building that stood out majestically silent and symbolical of something unknown.

Mamie, on her way from "Lonely Vicinity," paused to look at it and wonder what the curious shadows on the stained arched windows meant. Often she paused at the beautiful marble steps to look at the beautiful Biblical symbol of *"Faith and Obedience"* that stood by the door, and while

she thus viewed its solemn import she wept passionately for the poor wretched soul of Mr. Cain.

This symbol was an altar of gray granite stones artistically fitted into each other with polished edges and rough relief surfaces. At the top it was bordered with carvings of gold within the borders of which lay a perfectly fitting white marble slab. Upon this lay the sculptured marble image of the bound and offered Isaac. By this altar stood another statue image of the "Faithful Abraham" with a bit of fire in a swinging basin suspended in one hand by a gold chain, and a lance in the other, preparing to offer up to God his precious son Isaac in "Faithful Obedience to His Will."

As Mamie pondered over the beautiful altar and its accompanying images a new light broke in upon her heart. Surely the thought that prompted him to erect this emblem of "Faith and Obedience" was a pure and holy one. But did it seem credible that so wicked a man as he would have ventured to have done such a good deed? At last she was happy; there was dawning in her pure, earnest heart a faint hope for his final salvation.

But as weeks passed away she eagerly sought for some manifestation of his repentance, all in vain.

He was as vicious as he had always been, scoffing at and cursing every redeeming trait of human nature and every token of Christian friendship. Yet he was less harsh and wicked toward Mamie.

One day Mamie had returned from a visit to

"Lonely Vicinity" and had gone into the library. The first thing that greeted her eyes was Cain's new large Bible lying open upon the table with a sealed message addressed to her lying upon the open pages.

She at once recognized the handwriting of Mr. Cain. She trembled as she took it in her hands. Ah! She dreaded its contents. But while she looked at it one sweet thought touched her face with a smile.

She broke the seal and while a solemn stillness hovered over the room she read:

"To Mamie:

"At last the new Temple is completed and soon it shall be opened for service.

"You have the privilege of dedicating it to the Lord whom you and your little band in 'Lonely Vicinity' worship. I herewith bequeath the Temple of Ariadne to the religious society of 'Lonely Vicinity.'

"Oh, Mamie, it depends upon your action concerning whether you accept this Temple as a holy one or not and whether you enter into service in it or not as to the eternal destiny of one poor wretched soul. Be cautious in your righteous indignation and be not too proud to utilize the Temple that a poor wicked, callous man constructed with his own labor. Remember, O remember! Yours, Cain."

What mysterious power was it that shook Mamie's person when she had read that letter? It fluttered from her hands and she covered her face in her palms and wept passionately. It was all she could do. To reject the Temple would be

perhaps a foreboding of disaster to her religious work in "Lonely Vicinity," and to accept it seemed wickedly tolerant of worldly vice and evil. But trusting all to the Lord she would devote the mysterious Temple to his service.

During the afternoon Mamie meant to visit the new Temple.

The summer breezes climbed softly up the cool fresco of the solemn grove that reposed peacefully on the hillside. Occasionally they seemed to lull themselves to sleep in the rocking tree-tops, then arouse from their tranquil slumbering reverie, turn back the myriads of drooping leaves from over them and hold them thus till the sunshine silvered their upturned sides with a lustre that made them seem as if they were laughing joyfully at their superior excellency.

With her eyes fixed on the cool pathway that led down into the valley where almost a perfect shadow brooded serenely, broken only by an occasional slip of sunshine here and there, Mamie walked toward the church and pleaded with her heart to relinquish its claim upon its idol.

The blood beat angrily and sullenly at her temples and throbbed heavily at her heart. She walked silently on and while the beauty of the afternoon was spread out like a fairy land before her she saw not its excellency but reflected over the past to the time when the fatal love blow struck her from the eyes of Cain. Oh, she would gladly forget him if she could, but, oh, the awful fate, too late! too late! The king had ended his conquest and was conqueror; but Mamie Homean, once so proud and free, was now bound down in

fetters and chains and was at last a slave. Oh, she would give the world to have been spared the awful ordeal of reviewing the unhappy past. She even allowed a Satanic influence to hold converse with her conscience; and she slightly felt a desire to fall a victim to the fate of Virgil who was put to death to prevent his reviewing the Æneid. For the past few months had been even a tragical Æneid poem in which her heart had been slaughtered and sacrificed at the price of an ill-fated love.

At last she stood in front of the grand Basilica.

The plan of its construction was of artistic Greek design, measuring from back to front one hundred sixty-four feet and seventy-nine feet in width.

The majestic Ionic-columned porch added a symmetrical module of architectural taste of regulation, thus prolonging the axis.

The choir end formed a half circle.

Mamie could not help but admire without reserve the impressive solidity of its general mass, the conformity of the lines, the amplitude of the domes over which the bell tower dominated soaring alone into the ethereal depths. All the blocks had been fitted and adjusted with infinite care during the construction and the powerful edifice stood with perfect equilibrium.

In elevation the exterior showed three façades, three small cupolas, the larger central dome and the campanile. Besides the front entrance by way of the vestibule, there was a great entrance at the back end of the transversal axis where magnificent ambulatories adorned the edifice, affording

pleasant walking galleries and insuring free circulation of crowds.

Mamie stepped upon the pure granite-paved arched gallery and opened the door. The solemn echo of her footstep upon the marble door-sill thrilled her with a "fantastic dread." But soon she walked on the carpeted aisle and no reverberating echo told of her silent tread.

She saw a grand spacious gallery crowded with symmetrically arranged seats. This was called the church proper. Beneath this was the crypt.

She went alone through its galleries and different departments, viewing its imposing grandeur. She walked about the four large pillars that sustained the central dome, thinking, thinking, thinking, of Cain—always Mr. Cain. Oh, how her heart ached now that she beheld his excellent work. Only one pitiful utterance escaped her lips as she leaned her face against one of the columns and wept; it was this:

"Oh, Mr. Cain!"

After she had viewed the beautiful pulpit, the circular choir and the altar, she egressed the solemn sanctuary and started home.

The rumor was afloat that the new proposed church for the "Lonely Vicinity" would not be begun till the following summer and that the large church belonging to Mr. Cain would be open to service until then.

Mamie made public announcement that all services thereafter would be conducted in the Temple.

They assembled Sabbath after Sabbath there to worship, and all wondered at the absence of its

owner. They naturally expected him to be present at the church of his own design.

Large crowds from the village filled its pews and the long-secluded spot of "Gethsemane" began to be a prominent place for religious assembly. But for the darkening shadows that brooded over it like grim death or the gloom of wickedness caused by the wicked callous instigations of its master, it would have been a *holy* consecrated spot where the *holy* peace of God reigned supremely.

One night Mamie lay awake with her eyes turned toward her window through which a beautiful slip of moonshine shone, revealing the faint lustre of the carpet on the floor and its exquisite texture and draping the fringed edges of the parted curtains with soft silvery light.

The scene was so enchanting that she rose, drew her chair close to the window, seated herself in it and with silent admiration viewed the silent repose of nature. She had not rested there long when the tramp of feet in the corridor below caused her to pause. She heard a voice as of some one contending with another. She was startled and she listened and waited breathlessly. At last she looked out and saw two gentlemen, one of whom she recognized as Mr. Cain, walking along the walk-way leading to the Babylon gate. The other gentleman was bound like a prisoner and Mr. Cain walked beside him with a pistol drawn over him. Her heart fluttered and seemed to stand still. What could Mr. Cain mean? Oh, he seemed so cruel. What poor unfortunate being had come to "Gethsemane" that night to meet the

fate of an intruder at the mercy of the master's hands?

When Cain and his prisoner had reached the brow of the hill which descended into the opposite side into the valley she saw the prisoner leap forward as if to escape. A glittering wave of the pistol and then a deep echoing report from it brought the prisoner to a halt. They disappeared among the shadows of the forest and she heard them no more. Mamie fell upon her knees.

None but the most humble and contrite spirit can feel the wonderful depths of an earnest petition to Almighty God. Only Mamie Homean could ever know the deep earnest pleadings of her desolate heart for the wretched man who possessed it completely.

The spirit leaps beyond all power and tendencies of conscience to restrain it and stands trembling before the awful majestic court of the Great Supreme Judge of all Eternity and Creation, pleading the cause of the wretched and ruined idol—pleading with no other cause than for the sake of the suffering spirit itself.

One beautiful afternoon in August, Mr. Cain, Mrs. Harwell, Lilian, and her governess were sitting on the long veranda that stretched along the east side of the mansion. They were silent, watching the beauties of nature that were revealed in the upturned faces of the pretty flowers that nodded to the passing breezes. Lilian had her sweet eyes fixed upon the flower of her admiration as he slowly rocked in his armchair in the person of Mr. Cain. With a feeling of jealousy, Mamie read in those yearning pensive eyes a world

of purest love. And as she observed the secret of her *protégée's* innocent heart she felt the sullen throbbing of her own heart tending to estrange itself from the once sweet union of tenderest affections. She bit her lip and a tear looked out through her silken lashes.

"It must not be so. Oh, it must not!" she murmured to herself. She would never allow an ill-guided prejudice to sever the bond between them. She could not bear to know the sweet, innocent child should ever suffer that keen disappointment that such disloyalty would cause.

While they sat in silence, Mr. Cain at length broke the silence:

"I sometimes wonder if my old *frère* Paix doesn't feel happier in his careless unconcerned way of living than we who are continually on a field of religious and skeptical conquest. Or I have even ventured further in such speculations and asked conscience if existence in a cryptic tomb isn't even sweeter than this struggling life from which we get only a tantalizing glimpse of that mysterious paradise?"

Lilian measured every word and fathomed their mysterious depths and when he finished, tears had gathered in her eyes. She drew nearer to him and spoke tenderly and sadly:

"Mr. Cain, try to think of a 'sweet by and by,' and try to think that you will finally be good enough to share its eternal happiness."

A tender smile conquered the scowl that had so long invaded his face.

"It is useless, child, to try, even if there were such an eternal happiness awaiting us."

A quiver of the glossy beard told that his lips trembled.

"Well, that is all that I can say, Mr. Cain; it is your obstinacy that will rob you of your inheritance in Heaven."

Cain did not answer, and there was several minutes of silence.

There was a lustre painted on the clouds that were diving beneath the glory of the sun. They were Lilian's favorite clouds.

"I think," said Mr. Cain at length, "before another splendid turn-out from the village invades my premises in conquest of geological research, I must absent myself from their detestable scrutiny and flee to the deep solemn uninhabited caves of the shadowy fiords of Norway. I would sooner be infested with Italian tarantulas than to be deviled with them."

"The undeniable right to erudition haunts the scientist to the undiscovered portions of secret mountain vales and caves and hills where perchance they find food for their insatiably hungry brain," put in Lilian. "You should not wish to deprive any one of this harmless, felicitous right nor detest their thoughtless intrusions and staring scrutiny. You just go right straight and get your mandolin or banjo and play a carol, call it the 'Scientist's Dream' or 'Am I so Strange that Scrutiny is My Enemy?' or something like that; I think you will feel much less morose than to be talking about a fabulous plague of Italian tarantulas."

There was a mischievous twinkle in her cunningly smiling eyes as she looked the Oracle of

"Gethsemane" in the face. A hearty chuckle from old aunt Becky, the colored servant who sat on the doorstep, brought about a lively flow of mirth through the little assembly. Mr. Cain gathered the child into his arms and fixed his glittering eyes upon the governess.

"I sometimes think," he said, "that it is a failure on the part of the Power of Creation that only a few angels like this one were created to make this dream of life, this 'sourgraped' mankind, happier with their humorous, sedative natures."

"And I have often wondered," retorted Mrs. Harwell, "why bright minds are so blinded as to fail to comprehend the beauty and reality of all human goodness and nobility."

"Ah, my most noble and unblinded aunt, when you shall have passed through the 'fiery furnace' of rigid experience then you will inherit a desire to 'flee from the wrath to come'—the infesting plague of tantalizing hypocritical humanity. Historians do the ancient Nero an injustice in their critical annals when they record his deeds as evil. He had a wicked, rebellious people to deal with. And even if he did instigate the Nine-Days' Conflagration of Rome it was only to gratify his curiosity to behold a burning city. His subjects were more wicked than he was. It was all right for him to have the Eternal City burned, to have the Christians persecuted if it was any pleasure to him; for all the happiness that he could possibly obtain was to be gotten out of this life any way."

"Cain, there is another interesting item in the facts of all the historians' records of immortalized

characters. You are pleased to take up characters to illustrate your doctrine and you are exceedingly pleased to use the names of Hobbs and Boyle, and Shaftsbury and Bolingbroke, and Hume and Voltaire and Gibbon, who instigated and cultivated the skeptical philosophy you have so misfortunately engendered. Along with Nero and Napoleon and Dante and Virgil and the aforesaid compare Moses and Joshua and Samuel and last of all our own dear Saviour, Jesus Christ. Cain, there is one interesting fact—all historians have proven a blessing to their race by having preserved the sanctity and truth of all that they have ever recorded. In fact they have been brief in their biographies of those characters whose lives were disgraced with hideous crimes. They should have exposed them more severely. Cain, you should guard youreslf against such prejudicial ideas."

"Indeed, Aunt Nettie, you are a perfect sage! I shall place your bit of Oracular Monition in my vest-pocket and whenever I find a place to heed it no doubt it will be resurrected and its sacredness heeded and inspected."

"Lawd, God-er-mighty!" exclaimed Aunt Becky, looking at him with an air of one speaking with authority from Jehovah. "You is er bomination in the sight er God, you is! If the debbill don't fry you in hell he mus' jist 'sign his kingdom. Ugh! I des shuddahs at you blackness."

CHAPTER XIX.

MAMIE was writing an epic poem on Gustavus, confinement at Copenhagen and his escape to the Delecarlian Mountains, when Mr. Cain came into the library, and before she knew it he was holding the incompleted poem with his own hand and smiling derisively down upon its author. She flushed and her eyes fell under the power of his intelligent eyes. But without a word he read what she had written, then passed from the room. Mamie looked after him in consternation. And for several minutes after he had gone she meditated over the strangeness of his actions. A critic's eye had inspected her poem even before it was finished. What did he think about it? She felt that she would rather have his approval than all the world of critics together. But she whispered "Why?" to her pleading heart. She looked over her work again, more rigidly criticising it than ever before. She wondered if he discovered any mistakes. She could find none. At last she put away the ink and locked her manuscript in the drawer and came into the drawing-room where Mrs. Harwell, Lilian and Mr. Cain were engaged in a lively conversation. Only a brief second she saw the flash of his eyes which instantly were averted to Mrs. Harwell, to whom he spoke.

"Well, well, Aunt Nettie," said he, as he ob-

served the beauty of the indignant frown on Mrs. Harwell's face, "your face reminds me of what Lancelot said of the Lady of Shalott when he said, 'She has a lovely face; God in His mercy lend her grace.'"

"Well, Cain, I cannot honor you with so notable an epithet. I can't say that you remind me of Sir Lancelot, for you are deficient of the courtesy and royal knightliness that marked his graces.

"But I was speaking of the moral and religious influences these great poets—Tennyson, Milton, Watts, Pope, Shakespeare, Longfellow, etc.—exert over the reading and thinking world. They teach us of our duty here and of a wonderful promise of a hereafter."

"Ah, yes, Aunt Nettie, there is a 'here,' but oh the hopelessness of a 'hereafter!' How can one trust in such a promise when there is no existing good to insure an hereafter? The term eternity suggests the pre-existence of some good, and we know there is nothing, no, not one thing good in this world."

"But, Cain, you are unreasonable. The world is not so corrupt but that good claims its rank in its file.

"'O yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill;
To pangs of nature, sins of ill
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the file complete.'

"Cain, there is as much good in the world as there ever was, and there will always be."

"It is passing strange," he said in a sneering tone, "how rational minds can be captivated with the fanatical enthusiasm which they imbibe from the pages of these ancients' frail tapestry on which is only a prodigious display of pedantry and erudition and no common sense.

"I am blissfully indignant just now over the wild enthusiasm among authors to write epic poetry on some strange legendary deity or myth about which they have not the least accurate conception as to what occurred just at that dark, dreamy age or anything obtained from history."

Mamie flushed but kept her eyes on the silken tassel of her fan, which she toyed in her fingers. She felt the staring gaze of Mr. Cain's magnetic eyes looking through the very mirror of her soul.

"And it is exceedingly astonishing to me that you, so indignant, so inflexibly poised upon your pinnacle of self-conceit and superiority would condescend to molest these authors whom you see fit to deride just now. But, nevertheless, I blissfully ignore your words of repugnance and emphatically declare with absolute authenticity that those ancient poets were inspired from noble impulses to pen their masterpieces to their race. I don't say that they were *specially* divinely inspired but God is the origin of every merit of good under the sun."

"Tut, tut! Aunt Nettie, your fanaticism bores me! That God you speak of had nothing to do with it. Man is possessed of an inflexible will and executes that will regardless of any external

power. Disraeli, the late Lord Beaconsfield, says that 'Man can be what he pleases,' and I hold to that faith."

There was a long pause, at last broken by Mrs. Harwell.

"Cain, doubtless you will be surprised when I tell you that I received a letter from Mirable Irving yesterday afternoon stating that she would impose herself as our guest for a short while. She will be here some time to-day."

"Great Jehovah!" he exclaimed, "that presumptuous female again. Our guest, indeed! Well, Auntie, you must summon all your hospitality and bring to bear all your affected generosity, for you must prepare to be both host and hostess. I cannot—I will not be infected with her intolerable presence! Just now I feel that an order from the vindictive woman, Madame de Pompadour, to put me in prison and receive the doom of the famous La Tude, would be much more agreeable than to hear of her abominable intrusions here."

Mrs. Harwell laughed heartily, but said nothing. At length she asked him: "What do you think of that new volume of 'Orthodox Lectures' by Leland Burnett, which I noticed you had been reading for the first time, and have left open in the library?"

"I just merely scanned the index and subject contents. If I had known such a volume had polluted the sanctity of my library all this while I would have relegated it to a securely sealed Pandora box as one of its most depraved misfortunes."

"And you read more than the contents, too, Mr.

Cain," put in Lilian, "for I heard you use one of the phrases contained in that book. Just before my governess entered you said to Mrs. Harwell that to an infidel a Christian was an object of amusement—whose religious proclivities shrouded him like the copious filamentous appendage of the Himalayan yak's—no beauty about them."

"Why, child!" he said in a kind of apologetic tone, "your innocency reminds me of the fabled Norwegian maid, Thelma, who inherently and naturally abhorred all forms of dissimulation. You carelessly and unmercifully expose my apparent deception. I beg pardon, I do remember, now, of reading that extract. In fact, I have read it all,—when the different productions were first published, one every week in the M——— magazine. I recall several passages therein contained; one, especially, which excited my repugnance more bitterly against this obnoxious Christian Orthodoxy. It was his quotation from Renan, who, in speaking of Jesus of Nazareth, said: 'Jesus shall become the corner-stone of humanity. so entirely that to tear his name from the world would be to rend it to its foundations.' Now such odious affirmations are enough to disgust a pure, refined intellect."

At this juncture and at the bold statement Mamie looked up at Mr. Cain, blazing an indignant look into his face.

"Mr. Cain," she said in an angry voice somewhat tremulous because of restraint, "I feel that it would be moral cowardice on my part to make no defense against such offensive statements.

"The religion of Jesus of Nazareth is the great

pre-eminent cause of all ages. It has survived the criticism of ever agnostic, every infidel, every skeptic that ever rebelled or instigated insurrection against it; and to-day, after eighteen centuries have passed away, it stands authentically and unmistakably the strongest incentive to morality of human actions that the world has ever witnessed. Even the strongest agents of unbelief are compelled by candor to admit that no other character in history has held the world under his power like Jesus Christ. I recall to your memory the words of Lecky, by no means a believer inn Jesus or his religion. He says: 'It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice; and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simplest record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists.'"

"I am to infer that you are well up on critical literature and especially historical literature," said Mr. Cain testily. "You refer me to the testimony of my fellow-freethinkers. Then doubtless it would be consistent to recall to your memory the language of that Roman author, Tacitus, who said that 'Nero, to get rid of the rumor (that he was responsible for the nine-days' conflagration

of Rome), substituted as the criminals, and punished with the most exquisite torture, those persons, odious to shameful practices, whom the vulgar called Christians. Christ, the author of that name, was punished by the procurator, Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius; the deadly superstition, repressed for a while, broke out again, not only through Judea, the original seat of the evil, but through the city also, whither from every side all things horrible or shameful flow together and come into vogue.'

"You perceive he terms it a 'deadly superstition' and an 'evil.'"

"Mr. Cain, I know that Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny, merely give Jesus and his religion a passing notice because of its little importance to them; that Strauss declared that the alleged facts of the gospel possessed no historical value whatever; but were simply traditions, myths and fables. But I can truthfully say that that Jesus whom they in vain try to denounce brought with Him and left the powers of a mighty revolution which no other man has or ever had the honor or power of propagating. Oh, Mr. Cain, hear me when I say that we all, every obstinate infidel, every proud agnostic, and every cynical skeptic and all will be compelled to exclaim with Jean Paul Richter that Jesus lifted with his pierced hands empires off their hinges, and turned the streams of centuries from their channels, and still governs the ages."

"Now be reasonable, Mamie. Aside from all these rash statements from these partially skeptical characters, there is another more consistent view to the futility of this odious religion. Take

science to throw down or destroy, or even compre- inconsistency of the Word. It is based on reason and of course the rational mind is bound to accept it; and if it contradicts the teachings of the Bible why then the volume is false. Science teaches that some of the miracles recorded in the Bible are contrary to the laws of Nature and scientific truth. For instance, the restoration of the withered hand was a mythical, fabulous idea. It is preposterous to think that the dead limbs could be reanimated and the body invigorated to life completely."

"Good! Mr. Cain, I am pleased to discuss this subject on the terms you propose. If you will remember there was a spiritual miracle in the case of the palsied man. Jesus had power to forgive the wretch's sins. So I draw upon the source of your 'rational reasoning,' and ask you to think. A spiritual miracle, the giving of moral and spiritual light to sinful souls, is beyond the power of science to throw down or destroy, or even comprehend. It is a prerogative in the realms of which science can never intrude.

"Can you, O Scientist, yielding to the powers of death and seeing a loved one snatched away from you forever, stand by that grave and refuse to weep because science has taught you not to weep?"

Mamie saw his face grow livid and a look of despair came over his countenance. But just then they were surprised by the presence of Mirable Irving standing in the doorway, smiling sweetly but pensively.

"Well, well, Miss Irving!" exclaimed Mrs. Har-

well with a sweet laugh, "we hardly expected you so soon."

"Then I have succeeded in surprising you all?" was the pleasant answer. "And myself as well, for I had no idea I should meet my old friend Mamie Homean here!"

"Why, Miss Irving, you have changed so astonishingly since I saw you last."

"Very likely I have. You know how great causes effect great changes."

After the inevitable prologue of feminine caressing and embracing, Mrs. Harwell conducted her to her room.

After they were gone, Mr. Cain chuckled to himself. "Well, I think her manners are rather rude," he said with a sneer. "She might have sent in her card, then her intrusion would have been somewhat modified. I suppose she will be back here in a few moments, so I had better prepare to abscond to the soothing solitude of the dreary Urals. She did not recognize me here a while ago—lucky! I must go to my gloomy rooms for a while." And with a lazy walk he strode from the room.

After a short while Mrs. Harwell returned with her guest. They engaged in such gossip as gratifies feminine felicity. Mamie, for some reason, was somewhat reserved, listening to Mrs. Harwell entertain their guest. She scrutinized Mirable Irving with the intentness of a skilled physiognomist. She observed that the woman glanced frequently and anxiously toward the door, as if looking for some one's coming. She had already made one inquiry for Mr. Cain, and it occurred to

Mamie that this woman was anxious to see him.

Mamie blushed as she suddenly realized that she was becoming jealous, and she busied herself with an envelope which she toyed in her fingers, keeping her eyes downcast.

Mrs. Harwell was embarrassed at the rudeness of her nephew's sneaking away from Miss Irving's society, and she waited anxiously all the afternoon for his return. They had not seen him since he left before noon. He did not return for supper, and it was dark when the clear chime of his wheel-bell announced his return.

There was a faint smile on Mirable Irving's face, and Mamie sighed quickly and bit her lip as they both saw the light on his wheel which he pushed by his side along the smooth walk-way. After a few moments Mr. Cain stood in the doorway, and as he entered Miss Irving rose to meet him. He took her hand, shook it tenderly, and said as he released it: "As I look at you, Miss Irving, I am immediately reminded of a certain nun whom I was pleased to admire in Paris a few years ago. Your face is the very personification of resignation, so calm, so patient, touched with a faint betrayal of anxiety. But in the main you are the same Mirable Irving *cap-a-pie.*"

"Well, Mr. Cain, I fear you have done me an injustice by having discovered new features in my personal appearance. That is natural and should be expected and observed without comment. Time, you know, changes all things. You are looking well now, Mr. Cain."

"Thanks. I wish I could reciprocate with you, although you are looking as well as you were when

I saw you last in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York."

"Mr. Cain, you are to be pitied—but I will not prosecute the argument further. But pray how do you find the feminine realm away here compared to those in the great cities?"

"To my great satisfaction, I found that my verdict once passed upon that sex as incredulous things was wise and true prophecy. I have found a great number of characters whose dissimulations have furnished my revengeful heart with sufficient proof to vindicate my just aversion for the treacherous sex."

He stood on the rug by the piano, and leaning his elbow against it he twisted the silken tassels that draped the magnificent instrument, and he continued: "I have enjoyed the highest conception of human felicity since I have been here, watching the dexterity and the amusing maneuvers of women. There are many Penelopes here who exemplify the fabled Penelope who turned off her numerous suitors with the promise that she would hear them when she finished a piece of knitting, which she unraveled at night to knit again the following day. Ah, the deception of the treacherous sex!"

"Ah, Mr. Cain," and she laughed, "I know the cure for your perpetual chronic mania. You just need to wash your hands in innocency of all perpetration of evil against the gentler sex and fall into the arms of some sweet Rachel like Jacob did and say, 'I surrender all.'

"'O a kiss—long as my exile,
Sweet as my revenge.'"

Mrs. Harwell laughed heartly, and a smile played mischievously on Mamie's and Lilian's lips.

Cain was embarrassed somewhat, but soon recovered and said:

"May the eternals forbid that I shall ever become so credulous as to fall into such a delirium."

Mamie rose and went to the library, where she engaged the while in looking over her work and looking up references for another poem.

After some time socially spent in the parlor, the household repaired to their respective rooms and soon all was perfect quietude. But Mamie toiled on with eyes weariless and energy roused to extreme enthusiasm till the deep, lonely hour of midnight. She was bent with eyes filled with tears over a volume of Mr. Burnett's work on "Religious Ethics," and sadly thinking of his early life of Christian piety and its end in a strange gambler's grave and a doom of perdition hanging over that tomb, when she heard a knock at the door. "Come in," she said gently, and Mr. Cain stepped into the library. Mamie looked up at him through tears and smiled sadly.

"Oh, Miss *Homean,*" he said, noticing that she had been weeping, "I did not mean to intrude so offensively. I only wanted to procure my maps and chart and survey a route to the North Pole and ascertain the proper and most congenial season to undertake the search. I think I shall be off

for Cape Brainerd, Grinnell Land, ere the hot season is over. Just now I feel that the solitudes of Greely Fiord would hide me in its icy arms and soothe me to sleep with its dreary lullabys and chilling kisses from its frozen lips and that peace would at last be found there; for I think I have thoroughly sought the world over for peace and yet I have not beheld a semblance of it anywhere else."

He turned his keen dark gray eyes upon her as if to observe the effect of his language. He smiled a chilling smile, for he read in her eyes the words that pleaded for him to stay yet a little longer. But he was vexed because those beautiful proud lips would never confess it; and he sighed briefly and caught his fluttering underlip in his teeth. He stooped near her, and turning the pages of the book she had been reading till he found the author's name, he asked, pointing his finger to the name:

"You once loved that man, did you not?" His voice was a sweet, tender whisper, and she felt his warm breath upon her cheek.

She tried to suppress her words, but in spite of her efforts she confessed in a strange, dreamy whisper: "I once loved him; I love him yet, and I shall always love him!"

He groaned, and grasped her hand till it ached. His lips blanched, and a strange pallor crept over his face. After a moment's pause he released her hand and dropped wearily into a chair. He buried his face in his hands and was lost in habitual, gloomy, desolate oblivion. It was just a while before day when he roused himself

and went out to quiet his fierce dog, that was howling and barking furiously as if there were an intruder somewhere near by. Mamie had retired some time before that, but she was tossing wakefully on her pillow, hoping, praying and weeping.

When Mr. Cain had quieted his angry dog and it stood cowering at his feet afraid of his lashes and threats and cursing, he saw a man hurriedly approach him across the lawn. The moon was shining bright, and Mr. Cain at once recognized the quick uncertain step of Alton Tolliver. He was considerably drawn over from the wound and the bullet which was inflicted there on that fatal night when Leland Burnett sent the whizzing bullet crashing through his side.

Mamie saw them from her window, and her heart stood still when she saw the man Tolliver approach Mr. Cain with a shining weapon in his hand.

"O, Cain, you villain!" cried Tolliver, in deep, husky, fearful tones. "Your doom is come. Oh, give me back my loved one, my precious darling Mamie. I *will* take her with me, or I will take your life!"

Mr. Cain gazed at him with awful, fearless eyes and grim visage. He stepped back ten steps and stood erect against his great mansion and squared his breast.

"Shoot me, thou hideous enemy of immortal souls!" he cried eagerly. "Oh, I had not dared to hope for so sweet a death as would come at your bloody, murderous hands! Your insatiably vindictive heart these many long years thirsted after

my blood; now, it shall be gratified. Shoot! I am ready to die!"

Alton leveled the weapon upon his enemy. There was a moment of silence; death had hushed everything; then there was rustling of a skirt, a quick soft tread of hurrying feet upon the gravel, and in an instant Mamie stood like a daring heroine between her king and his enemy. Her face was calm, resigned, fixed, and white as it appeared serenely defiant in the soft moonlight. Just then she recognized the desperate man, and with a gesture of horror she screamed: "Oh, Alton, for God's sake, don't!"

There was a loud crash—a blaze—then the smoke cleared away and the dull echo died away in the hollows and cliffs. He had fired a truce in the air, and when the smoke had cleared away he drew nearer to Mamie as if to ascertain her identity, then he threw up his hands and cried:

"My God! Oh, Mamie, you have forsaken me!"

He moved slowly backward till he had retreated from their sight, saying as he went:

"Love is a curse, Life is a mockery! O God, where is thy justice!"

Mamie and Mr. Cain gazed at each other for some minutes without uttering a word, then Cain seized her hand and with tears in his eyes and a faltering voice he asked:

"Mamie, tell me why you interceded for me."

"Because you looked so much"—she would not say.

He longed to clasp her to his heart and tell her of his great love—a love born of purest eternities,

but he only lifted the soft white trembling hand to his lips and released it.

In an instant he was gone. She stood there as if waiting for her heart to resume its beating, for it seemed to have stopped. She was trembling and crying passionately. At length she took a seat in the large willow chair under the shade-tree and there she gave herself up to love's purest dreams. She was there when morning broke, and before she knew it Mr. Cain was standing before her. His face was grim, and the habitual scowl rested there. It was not the tender passionate face that looked at her in the moonlight, nor were those cold scornfully curled lips the tender lips that touched love upon her hand.

"Has Morpheus at last awakened her slumbering somnipathist?" he said as she looked up at him as if just awakened from a sleep.

"Goood morning, Mr. Cain."

"Good morning, Miss *Homean.* Let me escort you into the house. Breakfast will soon be ready, I hope."

He offered her his arm, but she evaded him, and before he was hardly aware of it she had flitted past him and was hurrying into the house. He looked after her somewhat dismayed, then laughed as one in triumph. Lighting his cigar he went to his stables, hitched up his favorite horse to the buggy and drove away.

All day long Mamie looked and waited for his return. She walked about uneasily from door to door looking for his return, but to her disappointment she was compelled to continue in her watch. She went out among the flowers to while the time

away, but even there she was anxious. Why was it that she looked and longed for the wicked master of "Gethsemane?" Why had she spent so many wakeful nights thinking of him?

That night about nine o'clock Mamie was in the library, deeply engrossed in her studies, when to her surprise Mr. Cain came suddenly in.

"Mamie, will you tell Sanford to take this letter to the postoffice early in the morning? I wish it to go on the 6:30 train, and as I shall not be here then, I trust that you will see that it goes off in due time. Pray do not ever allude to the letter to any one; it is a matter of profound secrecy to me."

As he handed it to her he affected a mistrusting look at her.

"Mr. Cain, I shall deliver the letter myself, as I am going very early to the village, and I assure you now that you may dismiss all apprehensions of my disclosing to publicity your affairs which, indeed, do not concern or interest me in the least. You should not have troubled me with the safety of your secret affairs if you doubt me. Here is your letter."

He grasped her hand and pressed it so tightly that she was almost ready to scream from pain. The cold, icy stare of his eyes vanished and a passionate appeal leaped into their languid depths.

"Oh, Mamie, if you could only trust me as implicitly as I have you I think I should not be so ill, so wretched, so desolate! Your pure, guileless spirit righteously abhors the blackness and treacherousness of mine. Oh, Mamie, darling, once my soul was as pure as yours, but the awful flames of

vice into which it plunged scorched and blackened and burned it till their remains nothing but the ruins and ashes where it perished. Oh, if I could only shut out the vision that haunts me and in my dreams goads me to frenzy. Oh, it is a vision that haunts me like demons glittering in the bloody depths of murder! It is too late to hope now. I am everlastingly doomed. I cannot retrace the wayward footsteps. I have fallen and my wistful soul looks upward, but it cannot rise.

"But Petronius laughed at his voluptuous feast and was happy even while the life-blood flowed from his arm and death was coming to gather him into his folds. And why not I be happy while I may?"

He stroked his soft black beard and laughed a short mirthless laugh that made Mamie shudder and step back.

"Nero shivered his goblets, drank his delicious wines, shivered his crystal goblets and scanned the scenes of revelry with his emerald and he was happy. He even quaffed his spicy wines unto drunkenness, but he never uttered that cowardly revengeful regret that 'Wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging.' He accepted the events of the hour."

"Mr. Cain, you are dishonorable! Why can you afford to be so disrespectful to me as to make a mockery of the cause for which I am struggling?"

"Oh, darling, some day you will know—oh, you will know *me* then."

He pressed her hands more tightly in his and the mournful melody of his voice touched the

tenderest chords of her heart and set them to vibrating a melancholy strain of saddest refrain. She remembered one other precious one who held her hand and told her so tenderly that she would know him some day. And, oh, how like his were the words of this strange lover!

"Mamie, some day you will regret that rash assertion that I am dishonorable. Good-by!"

He stooped to ignite a match on the heel of his shoe to light his cigar, and Mamie passed out of the room. As the door closed behind her he laughed bitterly and repeated in a low meditative tone as he slowly walked back and forth through the room:

"Fill the bright goblets,
Spread the festal board!
Summon the gay, the noble and the fair!
Through the loud hall in joyous concert poured
Let mirth and music sound the dirge of care!
But ask thou if happiness be there,
If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throe,
Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear;
Lift not the festal mask! Enough to know
No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe."

"Ah, how true," he said huskily. "No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe."

CHAPTER XX.

THERE was a great stir among the gossipers; a clamorous mob of invading inquisitions tormented the more peaceable to a worrisome degree. It was all about the great dedication of the Ariadne Temple. At last the day arrived when the important service must be had.

Since the arrival of the beautiful Mamie Homean in that "Lonely Vicinity" religion had made wonderful progress. Mamie rose fast to a glorious reputation, and the news of her wonderful religious talent spread far and wide. She was destined to be a great Evangelist. Every prospect for her was promising. God had at last blessed her efforts and permitted her to see the fruits of her labor. It was to her that the tribute of praise should be lauded, for she was the angel that God had sent to help the poor people of "Lonely Vicinity."

On this beautiful Sabbath morning Mamie was walking down through the shadowy valley alone on her way to the Temple to her Sunday-school, which was to precede the dedication service. She was glad, supremely happy, and she was thankful that she had again enjoyed the re-establishment of her good name. She remembered her child-

hood prayers, the blessed answers God had whispered in her childish heart, and she now heard again as she then did the sweet answer and its fulfilled promise: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many." As she walked along once more the prophetic exclamation broke upon her lips as it did in childhood:

"How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; . . . that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

She felt that she had brought good tidings and had established peace there. She had, with great religious enthusiasm, declared Zion's God reigneth, and she fancied that she could hear the prophetic promise of God saying:

"Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."

The venerable Bishop had arrived, and the vast congregation had assembled.

As the aged preacher passed slowly up the aisle a sweet strain of music floated down to meet him.

Lilian sat at the great chapel organ and Mamie stood by her with her wonderful violin. As the joyous welcome refrain rippled from under the graceful sweep of Mamie's bow and joined its harmony with the rapturous music of the organ, Mamie's voice rang sweet and clear, like the echo of an enchantress singing a welcome to some charmed object under its power. Mamie looked up as the old man approached and suddenly her voice faltered and her bow waned. But she soon regained herself and the grand music went on.

Another form came slowly up the aisle in the

person of Mr. Cain, and he smiled as he caught the yearning passionate gaze of Mamie Homean. As the last note died away he stepped in and took his long unoccupied pew. His face was firm and his carriage graceful. A whispering stir went from lip to lip in comment upon his unusual presence.

The grave old minister sat in the altar chair with his Bible in his hand and his face became serene as he turned the leaves of the sacred volume. At last he rose, and stood by the shining marble pulpit and looked over a vast multitude which crowded the gallery to its fullest capacity and filled the doors. There was perfect silence as he surveyed the great human vortex like one grand supreme master observing a scene of paradise.

Then he turned his eyes to the sacred page, from which he read the dedication sermon text:

"Death is swallowed up in victory," for "we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

The sermon was solemn and eloquent, full of a wonderful Christian zeal and spiritual power. In grandest figures of eloquence he preached the certainty of immortality and the redemption through the atoning blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Mr. Cain sat all the while with his head bowed on his hand, but the wonderful message from the man of God sank deep into the dreary depths of his wretched heart.

At last the services were completed and the congregation dispersed.

But down in the pretty cool valley between the Temple and "Gethsemane" Mamie waited and watched. She was crying like a broken-hearted child.

She did not wait long till she looked up to see the good dedicating minister bending over her and smiling with great tears streaming over his face. Mamie rose and stood before him. He extended his arm pleadingly toward, and cried:

"Mamie, my precious foster-child!"

"Oh, father! father! do you know me at last?"

She glided into his outstretched arms, and there the long-lost foster-father, Roscoe Homean, strained his precious darling to his heart.

They were too happy to speak, and there they remained for several moments in silence locked in each other's loving embrace. When at last they released each other they rested under the shade of a great spreading oak. There they talked over the good old days spent at their old home in peace before the cloud of desolation settled over it. There they talked, and laughed and wept, now happy, now sad, as they recalled the long gone past. They had for some reason avoided speaking of Leland, and Mamie wondered why. She sat for some time after they had paused a while thinking, aye, even hoping that Mr. Homean could tell her something of Leland that she had never heard. At length she looked up at him with tearful eyes and trembling lips and asked in a strange voice: "Father, can you tell me about Leland?"

He burst into tears, and caught his child in his arms and whispered:

"Hush, hush, darling! I cannot tell you now.

Some day I can tell you all! I must go away now. O child, do not plead for me to stay, for I cannot. I must go away! I am under an assumed name, Bishop Harvey Weeks. And some day I will come back to you and claim you as my child again. I will write to you. Good-by, Mamie."

"Oh, father, how can I tell you good-by!"

The weeping minister folded her in his arms and his silver locks mingled with her beautiful brown hair while he breathed a solemn blessing for her. She sobbed more passionately as he touched his lips to hers and gently put her from him; and turning he hurried away, fearing to linger around the painful scene lest he be tempted to stay with the child he loved so well—the only earthly tie he could claim on earth. —

Mamie looked after him and cried out in anguish, wringing her hands as one in extreme despair. She was tempted to flee after him. At last he disappeared in the forest, and she turned turned toward "Gethsemane."

The days were lovely about "Gethsemane." Nothing of interest occurred for several weeks.

The days of September were gradually drawing out the curtains and shadows of night to cover the extremities of the day, and the sun moved the shorter way across the universe. The myriads of tiny congelations had turned the forest into a glaring canvas of crimson and yellow, and had drawn their plastic virtue over plains and meadows, giving them their winter robes.

Day after day Mr. Cain roamed the great forest wilderness in search of the game which it

amply furnished; or he would spend hours in his private library poring over ancient mythology or some volume of traditional lore. Everything moved on in peace and dull quietude. In passing each other or on meeting at the morning meal Mr. Cain and the governess merely bowed demurely to each other in salutation or greeting. His manner was haughty and noticeably aristocratic; Mamie's manner was pleasant, agreeable, yet sufficiently commanding and defiant.

But there is no scene of quietude but ends in some new experiences and exciting casualties.

It was one beautiful moonlight night of the last week in September when Lilian and Mr. Cain played an interesting game of billiards and spent their last night of pleasure together under the cryptical veil of nom de plume.

They laughed merrily as the hours glided away. When their balls would clash the echo would hardly return when an explosion of triumphant laughter burst from the lips of the luckier gamester.

Mamie Homean sat in the library pretending to read, but her eyes very often wandered into the rotunda where the happy couple spent their leisure hours under the brilliant effulgence of the magnificent chandeliers. Mr. Cain's quick peals of laughter touched her heart, and every word from his lips was to her a sound of music from a far-away celestial realm.

But, oh, how she utterly despised his sinful nature! How completely detestable was his terrible depraved life to her. The fact that he had entertained such bitter aversion for her sex stirred

up in her heart latent contempt and loathing for him. She even ridiculed and derided her own weak nature for having accepted the challenge of his magnetic power. But though she mocked herself thus she was bound to admit to her pleading heart that his charming person possessed some wonderful infatuation against which it was useless for the captivated heart to rebel.

At length the game was ended and all repaired to their respective chambers. About midnight Mamie grew weary of her restless wakefulness and getting up she took a seat in an easy armchair by her open window, where she leaned her head against the window-sill and looked over the beautiful valley as it swam in floods of moonlight. While she sat there her memory stumbled over every barrier of her life. Many reminiscences flooded her memory, and she wept there in the silence as one who had lost hope of ever enjoying life again. Now and then she would brush the tears away, and a sad smile would creep over her pale, care-worn but lovely features as she indulged a happy love-dream of Mr. Cain.

Oh, how completely his life, his happiness, his love, was interwoven into the sentiments and passions of her yearning, bleeding heart. Her every thought was of him. She spent many sleepless nights weeping, praying and hoping for him.

Oh, how true, how beautifully sweet, and how eternally loyal and devotedly passionate is the love of a pure sweet woman! Such love has ruled the world ever since the age of chivalry dawned, and shall reign supremely the princess of all ages to come. Aside from the divine love of God

it is the unconquerable power of mankind to-day and shall reign in eternity second only to God's love.

How many broken-hearted, sweet-spirited women like Mamie Homean have nursed their eternal weight of sorrows by an open window looking hopelessly out through the stillness of night upon a dreary friendless world? Ah, Eternity alone knows that great secret.

Soon her career as an occupant of "Gethsemane" and as governess would soon be ended and she must try the realities of a heathen world. She must venture out upon the strange unknown waters of an untried sea. There was no remorse or regret in her heart to-night, yet sadness lingered there.

The fruitful fields of her earnest labor were dipped in the depths of life's benedictive dews and the serene calm of a satisfied soul lingered in her bosom. But now only a few more days and she must leave the home and the people she had learned to love so well. As she sat there in the wonderful silence she thought of a letter which she had received just before supper. She took it from the little table, broke the seal, and read it by the moonlight. It was a letter from a member of the "Woman's Foreign Mission Society," stating that if she desired to stay at her home till Christmas holidays were over they cordially granted her the privilege and would be glad for her to come as early as possible thereafter.

She gladly accepted the privilege. She put the draping window curtains back to admit more

freely the perfume-laden breezes which had loitered among the fragrant flowers and dallied amorously with the pliant foliage of the great forest. From her position she could see the magnificent campanile of the wonderful Temple as it stood out against the midnight skies. She looked up into the ethereal depths to see the myriad host of lovely stars. Each one climbed the cold dim solitudes of space and twinkled as if proud of its existence.

While she sat beholding the silent sentinels of the universe she heard the soft tramp of some one walking in the corridor below. She heard the door close and some one step out upon the smooth concrete walk-way. It was Cain. He pushed his bicycle slowly along, stopping now and then as if to contemplate the necessity of his going. He paused beneath her window, and as he pushed his hat back from his glossy hair she saw a terrible death-like pallor overmasking his face. She wrung her hands in anguish and stifled a cry as she looked upon her king, and wept silently.

She heard him mutter in a low, melancholy tone: "It is finished! It is finished! I must say good-by forever to my own dear one! O God, spare me the awful ordeal!"

Mamie's heart bled; she sobbed violently, and as she leaned yearningly down to him with her hands extended toward him her warm tears fell upon his hands and he looked up. He smiled sorrowfully but passionately, and the sweetest smile that ever graced the lovely face of a woman was Mamie's response. She saw death written in his sad but handsome face and she shuddered as he

mounted his wheel and rode away. Death! Ah, verily she thought of Michael Angelo's last words: "Ah, so near to death and yet so far from God!" He had said it was finished to-night. He appealed to God to spare him the awful ordeal. Could she believe herself? Was he really bidding farewell to dear old "Gethsemane"? He said he must bid farewell to his *loved one.* That loved one was evidently Lilian. But could she, Mamie Homean, let him go away forever? Indeed, it would be better for her to never look into his magnetic eyes again. Yes, she would let him go and strangle to death that hungering love in her heart for him, whom her whole nature and better judgment hated most bitterly. Then once more she would be free.

But, as the passionate appeal called loudly and pleadingly to her stubborn conscience, it began slowly to yield, and before she was hardly aware of her departure she found herself anxiously hurrying down the shadowy valley in eager pursuit of the departing mundivagrant. She was sure he would stop at his wonderful Temple to behold for the last time the solemn import of its grandeur, and she could see him there. She could secrete herself somewhere among the shadows of the galleries and he should never suspect her presence. There she could behold for the last time the idol which her heart had proclaimed its king and worshipped as its faultless ideal god. Her stubborn, sullen conscience would be lenient and through pity for the aching, dying heart would, for a passing hour, permit it to indulge the momentary blissfulness of a farewell look over into the promised land, then upturn the sod and

bury it in an unknown grave where she might never behold the resurrection till the great day when all pure sanctified spirits shall come forth from their tombs, shake off the sepulchral shroud and wing their flight to that beautiful City of God.

The chilly dim light of stars fell upon her pathway while the moon crept behind a pearly cliff of clouds, and a shuddering sensation made her falter on the way. When she reached the brow of the little eminence which overlooked the magnificent Temple she saw the dull red light glaring through the windows of the church revealing the glories of the pictured glass cathedral windows of the mysterious basilica. She paused and pressed her hands to her throbbing temples and passed her moist fingers across her forehead as if some awful pain were there. She gazed long and earnestly at the dull red light and shuddered at the thought of its significance. It was the symbol of a great burning gulf that separated her from the object of her worship. Her heart in its maddening rage might plunge headlong into the burning lake that intervened, but reason rebelled against such a possibility. She stood at the pretty white gate in front of the main entrance. The door was partly open and through it streamed a ribbon of light. She stood in the light unaware of the plain view to which she exposed herself. She waited and listened, but the only noise that gave evidence of his being therein was a quick smothering cough. How could she possibly get in without him knowing of her presence? But the hungry heart never exhausts its

power of devising plans by which it may attain to the extremity of its desires. As if guided by some friendly decoying spirit she found herself quietly stealing her way through the grand, tall arched gallery. Reluctantly and cautiously but with a determination that knows no defeat, she entered the vestibule and glided into its shadows. She looked cautiously through the open door and saw with infinite yearning and wistfulness the handsome man whom she so completely and helplessly loved. He was standing by the beautiful clouded marble balustrade, with his elbow resting upon the chapel organ with his head bowed upon his hand, while with the other he slowly turned the leaves of the Bible. He paused and lifted a keen, glittering dagger from the altar railing and looked blandly and frenziedly at it for a moment. A keen pang seemed to stab her heart as Mamie realized the awful realities of ensuing death. Intuitively she knew that he had come there to end his existence forever. She knew that to-night in his desperate perdu hopelessness he would stab the suicidal weapon through his heart. Ah, she knew it, she saw it in his face, she felt it! Oh, how her desolate, bleeding heart hoped, pleaded, prayed for that poor wretched mortal. If she could but reach out her hand and rescue him from the inevitable perdition to which he was hurrying she would thank God and offer her own life instead. She looked pityingly at him and thought of that wretched native of Northern India who murdered his brother because of jealousy. That poor depraved murderer had fled to a secret temple hidden in the sequestered groves

of a lonely island and was found at last by a missionary of the Cross. Also this poor wretch Cain had fled to his mysterious Temple and she, another follower of the Cross, had found him pale and emaciated, the very semblance of a victim of Heaven's vengeance.

Yes, death was his aim. He had bidden farewell to his beloved Lilian back at "Gethsemane," and while she slept sweetly on her little couch that beautiful moonlight night he would end his sinful, ruined life there in his beautiful Temple where she might come and find her murdered lover and behold the blood of his pierced heart as it would trickle coldly over the marble altar and drip from the point of the fatal dagger. He had always declared that "death was only a leap in the dark," and that it was not a passing from time into what he termed a "fabulous eternity." How plainly she could see the blood streaming from his pierced side as it did from the pale emaciated Christ who hung upon the cruel cross that the world might be redeemed. She shuddered at the awful conception. What could she do? Could she prevent such an awful catastrophe? Should she be so presumptuous as to boldly intercede and presume upon his purpose? She felt that she must save him at all cost. Even though he mocked at her and pointed her out to his own haughty person as an object of derision, she must make the attempt. She cheated herself into the belief that to rescue him would be an act of greatest kindness and supreme benevolence to her precious loving friend and *protégée*. It would be a deed of a heroine and not a selfish design.

She possessed herself, adjusted the low lace-bordered bodice about her neck, smoothed back the glossy waves of hair which were loaded with pretty white flowers resting above a beautiful crescent, and smoothed the wrinkles out of the beautiful pale blue dimity dress which graced her lovely figure.

Just then Mr. Cain seated himself at the organ, and lo, a wondrous anthem of pathetic strains touched the silence of the night with its strange pathos. Somehow a desolate sorrowful spirit mingled its sad refrain with the melancholy harmony, and it was the tender refrain that sank deep into the sympathetic chambers of Mamie's heart. Ah, well she knew the sad spirit of Mr. Cain was mingled in that rare melody. She put her little hand tremblingly to her heart and extended the other pitifully toward her lover. She listened entranced at the music as it wafted through the spacious galleries and archways to her in that touching song, "In the Sweet By and By."

"O God!" she murmured with a sob.

At last the last note died away in the silent sanctuary and he rose, turned to the marble balustrade and stood there motionless looking down at something there on the altar. Yearningly and unconsciously Mamie stepped into the deep calm of the silent gallery. She seemed to be borne on the wings of idealism, so noiselessly and gracefully she glided down the carpeted aisle, nearer and nearer to the altar. Her heart seemed to refuse to beat, and her footsteps faltered. Even when within just a few steps of him, con-

science drew back and sounded a retreat, but determination and that yearning, hungry heart whispered: "Please, just for Lilian's sake," and that conscience obeyed. When within a few feet of him she paused to look at his hopeless, desperate countenance which was revealed by the brilliant light of the chandelier that was suspended over the altar, and streamed its light over the choir end. The lines of ceaseless agony in his face told the story of a life of long suffering. Only a moment held her thus. She courageously and noiselessly advanced, and thrusting one hand around him she laid it firmly upon the dagger and put the other, beautiful, white and warm, upon his listless fingers and clasped them passionately. She looked sweetly—ah, so sweetly—up into his haggard face, and her voice whispered half aloud, tremulously and tenderly:

"Oh, Mr. Cain, do not break poor Lilian's innocent heart! Dismiss all your dreadful intentions and try to live for her sake,—Oh, won't you?"

"Oh, Mamie! My darling Fjonkon! My beloved!"

His wonderful pleading cry, the strange pathos of its hopeless tone rang with startling echoes through the silent church.

Mamie sprang back and threw up her hands in Caryatic attitude. She was amazed. The name of her obscure childhood was upon his lips.

But she had no time to ponder.

CHAPTER XXI.

CAIN stood by her with his arms extended toward her; and there shone in his face and eyes a serene rapture that she had never seen there before. He was advancing toward her; she drew still back, but he followed her and caught her in his passionate embrace, and while she struggled in vain to free herself, he strained her to his heart.

"Oh, child, my darling, don't you know me! Did you believe I could bid you farewell and die a shameful death and go down in a dreary tomb never to see you again? Do you believe I could let you go away to those far-away heathens to be ridiculed and sorely tried by their cruel homicidal barbarism?

"Ah, Mamie, I knew you would come to me here. My darling, you did not know that I know how many nights you have sat by your window and waited and watched and listened for me to return. You were sitting by your window to-night thinking of me, praying for me, crying for me. You saw me; I said something but you did not hear it. But you knew it all. You knew that I could bear my torturing love no longer, and that I came here to die. Yes, to die and go down,

down, away somewhere." His voice sank to a far-away sadness. "Oh, I must die if I must give up my precious angel, my only hope that has sustained my wretched and ruined life these many long dreary years! Oh, no, my dearling, my life-long lover! You cannot go away to the heathens. You are mine forever!"

"It is dishonorable in you; it is cowardly disdain for you to speak such words to me! Release me at once and take your contemptible hands off me! You have no right to hold me in your arms, let me go!" She struggled with all her might to free herself, but he held her tightly against his breast.

"Oh, Mamie, you jealously blind child, it is for your own sake that you have followed me and not for the sake of that precious child Lilian, who sleeps in peace at 'Gethsemane.' Ah, you hide your face against my shoulders and refuse to speak, but your beautiful eyes too long have mirrored the secret of your pure guileless soul. You are too proud to admit it.

"Darling, I have never loved but one woman in this wide world, and all along down through the gloomy, dark years of my desolate and desperate life that love has remained in my heart and sustained me."

He drew her beautiful face to his lips as if to kiss her lips, but she turned it from him; and he whispered in the tenderest tone that she had ever heard from mortal lips. It seemed to steal with infinitely seductive and soothing touch through the purest and most passionate love-lit realms of her flaming heart. Thus he whispered:

"Oh, my darling Mamie! My sweet 'Lily of the Valley.' If you could only look into the desolate solitude of my lonely heart, and there behold the beautiful idol that has survived all other propensities and affections; and which stands there alone enshrouded in the lonely gray ruins of ashes where all other affections have perished in the flames of my maddened, outraged heart, you would there behold a never-dying love for the beautiful pure woman, Mamie Homean!"

"You are wickedly false! You are dishonerably contemptuous in your behavior to me. You do not love me any more than you do that dagger there which is an enemy to your life. Oh, Mr. Cain, I have always believed you were unwaveringly true and free from deceit; do not force me to believe you guilty of such despicable hypocrisy; and release me that I may go away from you forever. Oh, I shudder in your merciless polluted arms!"

He unwound his arms and seated her in one of the pews; then walked quickly to the door and locked it, and came back to his captured, but not conquered victim. He stood like a towering statue above her with folded arms and looked down upon her.

In clear, eloquent, perfect accents his voice rang through the solemn Temple:

"This night shall be a night of great revelation to you. I am the messenger bearing the secret story of a wonderful past with which you have been mysteriously connected. I now lead you to the façade of the dismal tomb of my buried youth and roll back the curtains that have silently en-

shrouded its wretched, ruined and wasted palace of happiness and innocency, that you may know all the painful truth."

He knelt beside her as she sat in the pew with her head bowed in her palms, and taking her hands and holding them down with one strong hand, he placed the other under her chin, and forced her to look into his face. He threw his head back and laughed a wicked mirthless laugh; and its echoes wandered through the arched and tall columns of the vision-like steroscopic sanctuary like lonely solivagrants wandering over infrequented solitudes. Then his face grew livid and a strange light leaped into the passionate depths of his wonderful eyes.

"Oh, Mamie, my darling! Don't you know me? Look once more into my face and search earnestly for one faint trace of recognition."

He smiled; she drew back and gazed wonderingly at him.

"I know you as Mr. Cain and that is the extent of my knowledge of you. Indeed, it is strange that you know my infant name, 'Fjonkon."

He looked toward heaven; his lips moved and tears came slowly over his careworn, haggard face and fell upon her hands. He drew a beautiful morocco-bound Bible from his pocket, kissed it, knelt beside her again, and placed it in her hands.

"Mamie, there is a wonderful story contained within the sacred pages of that wonderful book; but more wonderful is the story that moulders in my heart to-night, and clamors for speech."

He put his hand under her chin, clasped her hand with the other, and as the tears streamed

from his weeping eyes, he spoke in a strange tremulous voice full of pathos:

"Darling Mamie, I kneel here at your feet, and, in the presence of Almighty God, I solemnly affirm that my words are the eternal truth,

"I am Leland Burnett!"

A wonderful silence gathered in the echo of his voice, and lulled itself to sleep in its own perfect stillness. Only the ticking of his watch could be heard as it seemed to be beating time with her throbbing heart, while she gazed vacantly and bewildered up into his truthful face. Her lips trembled; her eyes grew dim; and the room seemed to turn with her. A half-smothered cry escaped her lips as she hid her face in her hands. Some five or ten minutes elapsed before he spoke, then he put his lips to her ear and said tenderly—ah, so tenderly:

"Down through all these trying, these dreary years I have never ceased to love the sweet child who first stole into my heart and won the deepest, purest passion of my soul. That child is Mamie Homean!"

"I can not believe you! You are deceitful. You ceased to love me the moment you first saw Lilian Dillon! You love her! I know it—I have watched it! Go! you cowardly hypocrite! Get out of my sight if you do not want me to utterly despise you!" She struggled to free herself, but he clapsed her cheek to his heart and she could hear and feel the mad passionate beating of its quick violent throbbing.

"But, Mamie, darling, when you are my wife you will feel more kindly toward me and will

sorely repent of having ever uttered such shameful epithets against me. I always knew you were jealous because I was so specially mindful of Lilian, and I was always glad of it. You shall be my wife! I no longer will tolerate——"

"Never in this world will I be your wife! I confess that I once loved you when you were good and innocent, but now—Oh, now!"

"Then you fully believe that I am indeed Leland Burnett? Dear Mamie, look at me again. Is this the Leland Burnett you first learned to love? Do you remember that morning when I told you that you would know me some day? Oh, how true were my words! Yes, you not only know my terrible life; you not only know me, but you love me so entirely that you can never conquer it. Oh, darling Mamie," and he strained her more passionately to his heart, "do you remember when you told me that you were no longer queen of nature; that you had fallen prostrate at the feet of a king greater than you; that that king was Love, and that Love was I? Do you remember that I pledged to you that I would trust you forever? Yes, I know you do. Then, do you think I have ever doubted you? Do you remember when we told each other good-by. O my God!" he gasped in despair.

"Oh, is it you? Can it be possible, Mr. Cain? And if so, Oh, for God's sake, forgive me, for I feel that I have been the cause of your wretched life. Will you, Oh———"

Her voice was choked with a sob, then a groan; she grew pale and attempted to rise but fell back helpless.

"Yes, sweet Mamie, I forgive you and I love you still. Won't you come to me now, my own dear Mamie?" he held out his arms, but she drew back in horror.

"But, Leland, you can see no good in my sex; you have declared your utter detestation and absolute distrust for all women; you are false! Mr. Cain can not love; his heart is perished; it has burned to ashes. Do not repeat such another infamous dissimulating assertion if you do not want me to hate you forever! Let me out of here, I want to be free from your polluted presence."

"Darling, yonder pale moon which descends the celestial avenues of heaven and looks in through that open window is the same moon that looked down upon the pious Nicodemus and the Saviour as they talked together in holy sacred converse; and ere it sank behind the horizon they had finished their sacred conference. So it shall be to-night. It shall not leave its ethereal realms till I shall have told you a wonderful story; for 'I have somewhat to say unto thee.'

"Mamie, you are as a captured bird which trembles even while it is being caressed and fondled; and you apprehend that you are imprisoned here with the vile presence of a devil and while he speaks words of endearment to you you are frightened. When I shall have finished my story, and you shall have gone away for a long time, perhaps, then you will remember the sacred import of my language when I say that I love you with an everlasting love—a love which no other woman can ever hope to enjoy or claim; and

you will return to me as a prodigal child to its home.

"Mamie, you know how wretched I am—what an awful sinful life I am living! You shudder when you compare my life now to my life when you knew me an innocent Christian gentleman; but, Mamie, when you have tried this hard old sinful world and proved it as I have, you will not reproach me so cruelly." His voice was broken and he groaned.

"It is useless to tell you of the intervening events that occurred while I lived at our beautiful home near Nashville. I lead you back to the ruined and wasted battle-field, where my noble manhood was slaughtered; where a desolate waste of a blackened burned soul went down in ashes, and from there follow me over the dark gloomy pathway of a ruined and wasted life!"

"I will listen to you, Leland, for I feel that I must know the great mystery. Tell me all."

He clasped his hands before him and closed his eyes for a moment, while the tears ventured through the closed lids; then he began:

"First there are some incidents in my life which are secretly and mysteriously connected with my life. I once knew a man who was a terrible agent from the devil and his Hades. His name was Adam Mathes, and his doctrinal proclivities were a conglomerated collection of skeptical speculations, affirming that Pantheism and universal orthodoxy were all vulgar superstitions; that men should not believe what they could not understand, *i.e.*, the entire Bible. He entertained many other contradictory fanatical ideas. His

fiery doctrine impressed me wonderfully, though I was reluctant to admit it even to myself. However, I resisted the temptation with true Christian fortitude, and only that poor mortal who has once tasted the sweetness of a Christian life then has plunged into the awful abyss of sin, can remember and appreciate its holiness and its purity.

"Mamie, I have here in my pocket a little black casket which contains the solitary cruel weapon and its agent which mocked me, betrayed me, and slew my heart. Did you know, darling Mamie, that it was a message from you that transformed me into a raging devil seeking whom I may devour? Did you know that I was looking at you that memorable evening when you met Alton Tolliver at the river in the gloaming twilight and fell upon your knees at his feet crying and pleading before him? Oh, you look blankly and blandly at me and wonder how I ever knew. I was there, I watched you both."

"But, Mr. Cain, it was peculiar circumstances that necessitated our meeting there. You are too rash in your reproach."

"For God's sake, Mamie, don't make me more helpless and miserable by shattering the already weak confidence which I have in you. Oh, child, I am already wretched enough; do not be unfaithful and deceithful! You say it was circumstances which made it necessary for you to meet at your trysting place. Did you never tell him that you loved him?"

He looked at her with the keenness of his magnetic eyes and she felt that he was reading her

very soul. But she looked up at him bravely and answered defiantly:

"No, sir, Mr. Cain. I did not. God forbid that I am ever so treacherous and trifling."

"Ah, child, I knew that I was justifiable in my suspicion and want of confidence and trust toward your treacherous, fickle sex. I did hope so much that you would be truthful, but alas! you have sadly proven the universal duplicity and despicable stratagem of your sex!" He groaned, closed his eyes in silence for a moment, then drew from the vest pocket nearest his heart the little black casket, and opening it he handed to her the little note which he found on the large rock by the river.

She took it and with trembling, blanched lips scanned the words which she had written years ago to Alton Tolliver. When she had finished it, it fluttered from her hand, and she looked up with appealing anguish in her strangely brilliant eyes to the man who stood before her looking sadly, hopelessly and coldly down upon her. She wrung her hands in anguish while he smiled mockingly and incredulously at her discomfiture. She hid her face for a moment and tried to think. Ah, that fatal note! Ah, well she knew now the mystery of his estrangement from God; of his deep-seated aversion for her sex. Inevitably that note would shatter and destroy his trust and fidelity. Apparently she was proven false, unfaithful, dissimulating and treacherous. Ah, how her heart bled, how it ached with the pain of that ever-torturing, yet never-dying anguish. How awful it seemed to realize that just one brief mis-

sive and one pitiful kneeling posture had turned a great noble Christian heart away from God.

At last she looked up at him mournfully, penitently and truthfully; her beautiful white hands went up in a tender pitiful pleading gesture; and there was a tenderness in her rich trembling voice the rareness of which only the truest, devotedest, most sympathizing and most loving heart can respond through that strange medium of telepathy. Thus she pleaded:

"Oh, Leland, can you trust me just for this one moment?"

"Darling, my heart will trust you, for I cannot control it; but I, myself, perhaps, would question your integrity. I will listen at least."

"Alton had always loved me, but, oh, he was so sinful, so wicked, so callous. I never regarded him more than as a friend. I was specially, ah, yes, deeply interested in the salvation of his immortal soul. I had pleaded with and reasoned with him to forsake his sinful life and to come to Jesus. Oh, how I longed to rescue that poor wretched boy from perdition! And, Leland, do you know the secret of my special interest in him? It was because he was your intimate, ah, yes, verily your affectionate friend, and I hoped and prayed that he might become a Christian that you would have no evil influence to bear upon you. Oh, Leland, I loved you then as I believe I can never love again. I spent many a wakeful night thinking of you, and planning for your safety and your happiness. I knew that your life was lonely at times, for you told me once that my childish fancy concerning life blinded me. You told me

that there is no life but what shadows darken over its way. You said there are times when one loses confidence in all things and hates all existence. You attributed it to a vacancy in the yearning heart. And, dear Leland, I tried to help you live happy by supplying that 'vacancy.' Poor Alton had pleaded for my heart, my love; he had pleaded for me to be his wife. He asked me to help him live happier. He asked for an opportunity to talk with me once more and plead his cause; then I wrote him that letter asking him to meet me at the river that fatal evening; which you know he did. Ah, Leland, believe me when I say that when I fell upon my knees at his feet I was praying for his soul's salvation. I could not help crying, I was so broken-hearted over his terrible, deplorable, sinful life. Oh, Mr. Cain, do not chide me nor rebuke me, for I am innocent of your cruel charge that I am deceitful and treacherous. God in heaven knows I am innocent of the sin of deception!"

He looked earnestly at her for a moment, then he looked upward, clasping his hands before him and cried out in a tone of strangest, deepest and most terrorizing anguish that ever a depraved man uttered:

"My God! My God! Thou art unjust! O God, that I had known the truth years ago before—" he hushed; he looked more hopeless and desperate than he had ever looked before. He caught Mamie in his arms and strained her to his heart, while his manly frame shook violently with convulsive sobs and deep groans.

"Oh, sweet darling of my heart, I have been

terribly misled. I never knew the truth till now. Oh, that I had known it then; I might have been different now! But, alas! it is inevitably too late now! I am ruined, desolate; a depraved, distorted wretch!"

He held her for a moment longer, then put her from him and leaned back against the railing of the gallery and continued his story:

"The sight of that note and the mocking vision of your kneeling at the feet of him who had deceived me turned me into a raging demon, and every noble aspiration, every spark of holy, consecrated love in my heart went out of me, leaving me a wretched, ruined habitation of desolation. A fiendish devil entered my petrified heart and proclaimed itself to reign over my mutilated, deformed, blasted life. I had received a letter from some unknown source before I was utterly and inevitably betrayed, which was designed to have been written by you. In that letter you informed me to dismiss all my hopes and affections for you; that you had found a more congenial suitor nearer home. Oh, child, it was this that stung me to desperation. I was in Washington at the time and I somehow could not believe that you would treat me so cruelly. I, therefore, went to Nashville to plead with you and win you back to my heart. They told me that you had gone to the river, and I hurried hopefully on, trusting that somehow you would give me a happy sweet welcome like you had always done, so peculiarly fascinatingly. But, ah me! how bitterly my hopes and sweet expectations were mocked and destroyed! There my heart ignited with the terrible

flames of insatiable vengeance. I was transformed. My quondam affections burned to ashes and I became a hopeless, mocking, savage devil. I hurried away from that tormenting place to get my gun and I hurried back to kill him! But you both were gone. I sought him everywhere. And at last found him in the outskirts of Washington one moonlight night, and there I shot him down with a murderous heart in my bosom as black as hell! Oh, what a horrible scene to see my friend, my rival, lying at my feet, groaning in the very jaws of death. I thought that I heard the voice of an outraged Jehovah crying unto me from the lips of a dark primitive age, saying: 'Cain, where is thy brother?' and immediately I fancied that I was indeed that ancient Cain who first stained his hands with the blood of his brother, and I answered in the language of him who first disputed with God: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Then I heard the eternal voice say again: 'His voice crieth out to me from the ground.' I fled from the horrible scene. I yielded to every sort of licentious living and plunged into the infernal abyss of vice. God had forsaken me; my loved one had renounced me; and all the world seemed to be cruelly trampling me under foot. I cursed God and went out into his kingdom to destroy his habitation; I raged and rebelled against Him as a roaring lion in the forest; and I sought in every way conceivable to make mankind and especially women, who had treacherously hurt me and made my soul, miserable. Oh, it was a pleasure to see a beautiful girl suffer the consequences of a fickle abandoned love which she had cherished and at

last lost. I indulged the heinous pleasure of trifling with the tender affection of one, Mirable Irving. Ah, she loved me! I won her heart while we were at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, then cruelly and mockingly deserted her. This I felt would gratify my vindictive heart and allay my misery. She to-day is dying under the torturing pain of an eternally broken heart, and I am more miserable than ever.

"My last memory of my rival was as I saw him grappling with death, and the blood oozing from his breast. I felt that I had killed him.

"I sought peace in the wicked, excessive indulgence in strong drink, and as I plunged deeper and deeper into sin I turned to an infidel. I said there was no God, for if there was, where was his justice?

"Oh, reproach me mercifully, for I was tried as no other boy was ever tried.

"When I went away I changed my name, because I hated it, and since then I have been known as Mr. Cain. I was a murderer, and the voice of Eternal Justice haunted my every waking hour and my every dream, crying unto me, 'Cain! Cain! Cain!'

"I went away to wander over the dreary world seeking some peaceful alcove where I could be free from the cruel world. I tried to forget you—aye, I even tried to hate you, but somehow my desolate heart clung to you. And I have never ceased to love you even amidst all these trials of my weary life. Now, my darling, with the fact of such a true and everlasting, passionate love, can you not come to me? Oh, come, sweet Mamie!"

He reached his arms toward her. She whispered "No," and she shuddered and groaend while she kept her face hid in her palms. He took the trembling hands down and kissed them, then resumed his story:

"I grew desperately savage. I roamed over savage, barbarous lands, isolated islands, and in the cold, merciless bleak polar regions in search of peace for my wretched soul. Christianity was a mockery to me, for I had united my love, my hopes and my Christian aspirations together and the unity terminated in a cruel, mocking fatuity.

"One day I was standing in the grand old Coliseum in Rome watching the multitudes pass back and forth. While I was looking I saw a person through the Arch of Titus, and he advanced toward me with a fiendish glare in his eyes. I was astonished; for the first time I believed my eyes were deceiving me. It was Alton Tolliver! I would have fallen humbly and penitently prostrate at his feet to implore his pardon, but just then he drew his revolver and fired one shot at me and demanded my surrender. Then that roaring lion of a devil within me leaped forth, and in the twinkling of an eye an Italian duello was being speedily executed. Through the angry drifts of smoke I again saw the awful visage of my antagonist as he clutched desperately in the dust. Oh, deliver me from the terrible look of his writhing face!

"I was sullen. I replaced my revolver in my pocket and walked away without being arrested.

"I then enlisted in the South African army and helped those rebel natives in their struggle against

their English oppressors. It was there that I purchased my fine Canadian horse and became a general of their army. I kept my priceless steed, and since that time he has gone with me to roam this old world over.

"I traveled into Norway with a company of English noblemen on a fishing and prospecting tour. One day after we had been fishing for some time I absented myself from the company and wandered over a deep still valley, where the waters could hear nothing but the continual splash, splash of their own silver sprays. There I spied a lonely path that wound through and up among the dense foliage of a dark pine forest. Through curiosity I followed its course and soon found myself at the threshold of a beautiful castle, which crowned a precipice overlooking a beautiful bay. I saw a middle-aged woman reclining in a large hammock suspended between two tall trees in front of her quiet home. I was at once impressed with the perfect tranquillity of such a beautiful Norwegian 'recluse.' I asked the lady for a cool drink of water, which she cordially gave me. After a few moments' conversation she seemed to become specially interested in me, and she began to open up to me her secret, lonely life and to give a history of her hidden castle. She told me that I was the first person that had ever visited the place since its construction. She began far back to her earliest known ancestry and traced the lineage up to where the family name was destroyed by a dispersion caused by the war between the States. She married General Harwell, with whom she lived some years in Liverpool,

where he died of fever in the earlier part of the year 1890. Broken-hearted, she went to Norway, built her favorite castle and had lived in it till I ventured the discovery of its seclusion.

"That woman was my dear Aunt Nettie Harwell, who sleeps yonder in my mountain mansion. When she gave me her history and the line of her ancestry I at once knew her to be my aunt.

"Mamie, you know I was a poor orphan boy of obscure parentage, and I never knew until some months ago that my dear father and precious mother still lived. It was a villain's confession that informed me of the mysterious fact.

"Oh, Mamie, my darling, believe me when I say that the people, Mr. Dillon's family, with whom I lived so long in Washington and with whom you lived so long before I came to "Gethsemane' are my long-lost parents! The dear sweet child, Lilian, is even more than a sweetheart. She is my only dear sister! Oh, Mamie, you know not the extent of your wonderful teaching to that dear, sweet little sister! Your fidelity to God, your pure, consistent life has wrought a revolution in one human heart that will last forever. Oh, darling, I shall never censure or mock your religion again. I shall never curse God again; and never another vile oath shall pollute my lips. The pre-eminence of your soul makes my soul the blacker and more corrupt by comparison; but it is not so callous that it cannot love you; oh, no; I still love you! Oh, child, you can lift me from the awful infernal perdition into which I have fallen if you will! You know, Mamie, and I know that you love me deeply, and

helplessly, earnestly, in spite of your conscious aversion for me. Oh, you love me, darling! Won't you come to Leland, who has proven that he will love you always? Oh, child, come!"

He waited a moment. She only remained still, and he heard her groan pitifully and saw her shudder. But she would not look up.

"It is useless to ask you if you remember the little golden locket that I gave you and trusted to your safe-keeping. There is only one mystery connected with it, and that is you either betrayed my trust or you lost it; for I found it one time while I was traveling along a lonely highway in Australia. I don't know why it was there, but, oh, child, it made me yield up all confidence; you had betrayed my trust."

"Oh, Leland, I was traveling in Australia one time; perhaps I lost it. I did not betray your trust. You are wickedly unjust! I am as innocent of prying into the interior of that little shrine as the little bird that sings all day long in his prison cage in the corridor back at 'Gethsemane.'"

There was a silence when she ceased speaking, and during that silence Leland hid his face against the railing's silken mantle and a half-smothered, shuddering moan came from the depths of his heart. At last he spoke:

"I brought that little locket to America with me and had it skilfully fitted in a beautiful shell, and in that shell on its pink concave I dictated the inscription of the words, 'A Vagabond of Nod.' I was, indeed, that wretched vagabond of Nod. I kept that shell about my person for a long time, but at last I lost it in the solitudes of this moun-

tain. But one day while I was watching Lilian, who had come to the big spring after her morning ramble, I saw her peeping at something in the spring and at last when she had fished successfully for the object I saw her draw up out of the water my favorite shell-shrine. I would have advanced to take it from her but I saw she was so well pleased with it that I could not cruelly take from her. I knew that she would take care of it, it, anyway.

"Oh, darling, God only knows how often I have hidden in the jungles and cliffs of this old mountain watching with famished heart and hungry eyes the beautiful child, my dear, sweet sister, as she rambled alone in the great mountain, singing and laughing and talking to herself and to the birds in childish merriment.

"I left the mountain and went to New York and resided one year in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. But I became restless and savage, and wandered back to 'Gethsemane,' a bitter, hopeless vagrant.

"It was a beautiful morning, and I had secreted myself behind a cluster of ivy vines to watch for my dear little sister again. I saw her coming up the hill with some one with her. I wondered who it was. I could not believe myself, for it was Mamie Homean. Oh, child, you looked so sweet that I could hardly restrain myself from springing forward and straining you to my heart. But I was too independent to intrude, as you had already dismissed me; and I, a poor, desolate, savage vagabond did not feel disposed to condescend to recognize the very sex that had slain me.

I hurried away to where I had hitched my favorite horse, and mounting him galloped across a gulf toward my yelping hounds, who were in eager pursuit of a deer. Somehow I lost the route, and in his excited speed my horse burst through the jungles, nearly leaping upon you both. No doubt you think I did strange by shooting there in your presence. But, ah! how often a wretched murderer like me is haunted by the ghastly spectre of his victim pursuing with maddening rage after him. And what did I know but that he had not died in the old Coliseum, where I shot him, as I had failed to end his life in Washington. I thought I saw my bloody antagonist pursuing after me with a grim death-like visage, and I fired at him. But all was blankness and void and delusion. As I had casually come into your presence I then took time to look at you both and to try you if you would recognize me. But to my chagrin you did not. I turned away with anger and vexation from you—to sullen to make my identity known.

"As to how the pretty precious shell-shrine came in the spring was very plain. I had passed that way some time before and had evidently dropped it from my hunting-vest pocket into the spring while I was stooped over drinking from the cool spring. That beautiful shell-shrine is yonder at 'Gethsemane' on the black marble table in the rotunda. I now give you this little key that you may unlock it when you choose to do so; and I now give you the privilege to see all the contents which have been hidden from you for so long. Darling, look at them, think of me, and

keep them in remembrance of the man whose everlasting love they typify!"

He took a golden key from his vest-pocket and handed it to her as he talked. His strong body shook and his lips blanched and fluttered as a deep half-smothered moan escaped them and he clasped his hands before him in anguish. Mamie toyed with the little key in her fingers and looked at it a moment; then looked up with a beautiful light in her pensive eyes, but her face was stern, cold and pale.

"Mr. Cain, I have no need for this key. I do not care to look into the little shrine, as I have already looked into it once. God is my witness that I never once suspected that it was the little casket that Leland had given to me till I had already opened it. But even then I did not absolutely know that it was my locket. But now you have explained all the great mystery. Take it away, Mr. Cain, for it will forever cause me pain to look at it. I know you once loved me, but now, O Leland, you have wandered far away from God; you have trampled unmercifully upon pure innocent womanhood; and you can no longer love me with the pollution of such black crimes in your heart. Take your precious locket and shell, and as you doubtless regard me as untrusworthy for having opened it you are released from bestowing your affections upon me. Stand back and let me leave this room!"

She sprang to her feet, but Leland caught her in his loving embrace, and held her tightly, passionately.

"Oh, child, of course I could not let you go.

You are the only true woman I ever knew. You have shown me a heart so pure, so passionate, so frank! Mamie, I had always believed you were more truthful than can be credited to your treacherous sex, but, O darling, I could not believe you were so entirely free from deception and stratagem as you have proven yourself to be!"

He held her a moment, and then put her back into her place in the pew and continued:

"From the moment I first saw you at the spring with my little sister I have watched you, ah, hoping that I might notice some strange freak in your daily life that would justify my revenge against you who had betrayed me. Many a night I have secreted myself in the shadows of those rooms in 'Gethsemane' to watch you, and to my chagrin I have seen you and heard you offer up to God your deepest, purest devotions. I was hid in a small alcove near the rotunda the very night that you opened the little shrine. I saw you turn the little shell about in your fingers and examine it. I almost prayed that you would open it; but you were about to put it away and I cursed my fate. I waited in dreadful suspense. Oh, the torturing of such anxiety! At last I could have cried out with a vindictive, savage feeling of triumphant victory when I saw you put your little key in that lock and open it. Satisfaction! Oh, it was satisfaction to me to see you blacken your soul with the sin of unfaithfulness! I thought it would be, but, alas, words can never tell how utterly desolate I was when I saw you fall down—down—O my God! You looked at your own likeness with astonishment and with tearful eyes; then put them

all back. I knew that all hope for me was gone then, for you had snapped the only slender thread of my confidence and left it dying on the famishing desert of a desolate Sahara.

"I believe you are true now. Oh, I was so cruel to hope that you would sink into the slough of sin; but, child, think of me as I was in that terribly distorted state of mind. Oh, I was raging and crying for ease of conscience and satisfaction of heart!

"Many a night I have stolen into my house unobserved and secreted myself where I could see your beautiful face while you pored over your books at night, or hear your musical voice in conversation. All this I did that I might learn of your faithfulness or of your treachery. One night I had watched you while you read about the murder of Heera Lall's daughter till you finished and left the library at the lonely hour of twelve. I was near enough to you to put my hand out and touch you, but I would not. Ah, little did you know that two yearning, hungry eyes were upon your beautiful face while you toiled on. I caused my shadow to fall across the floor in the rotunda just as you passed the door, and I touched two billiard balls together that I might attract your attention. I heard you stop and waited for you to come, but you passed on. Do you remember the night, Mamie?"

"Yes, Mr. Cain, I remember well."

Her voice was tremulous, but she did not look up.

"Mamie, I was near you that evening when you read in the paper the account of my death in

Washington. I watched you eagerly to see the effect it would have upon you. I saw you fall; then my heart rejoiced, but my conscience was sullen to admit that you were faithful still."

He paused a moment, and he heard her sobbing.

"Five years ago I built that beautiful 'Gethsemane' mansion. I chose that spot because of its perfect seclusion and beautiful scenery, that I might return to it when I became tired of the world and enjoy its peace and tranquillity.

"I had been to the village one night and was on my way back to 'Gethsemane' when I stopped on the little brown bridge to rest and look out over the river and the fairy land of beautiful valleys sleeping under a dream of moonlight. I was weary, sad and lonely. I had not rested there long till some one stepped upon the bridge and advanced toward me. I sprang to my feet and faced him. He shouted in thunderous, commanding tones: 'Halt' then shot me. The ball was buried in my side; I fell, but rose again and confronted him. It was Alton Tolliver. He spoke in hurried, mad accents to me:

"'Your perverted black heart has no rightful claim upon Mamie Homean, whose love you once possessed; and yet your damnable conspiracy has led her away here into obscurity. I have come and I demand the beautiful person of Mamie Homean!'

"I answered clearly and emphatically: 'It is not within my power to restore her to you, and I emphatically assure you that you shall fail of your purpose if you demand from me the delivery of

that woman to you or any information of her. I am a character whom it is impossible to frighten into terms or actions. I neither jump to conclusions nor leap to actions through excitement, but always meditate calmly and act deliberately even in the thickest of "grape-shot." Leave me at once!' But he drew nearer, cursing madly as he came. I drew my revolver and threw it into his face, when suddenly a wild scream of horror rose clear and shrill from the steps that led up to the bridge. It was a girl clad in a beautiful white dress. Her voice was beautiful, though sad and far away, and her face was beautiful, touched with a shadow of painful melancholy. It was enough to touch the numb heart of a Sphinx, but I was blind, mad, desperate. She had followed Alton and Alton had followed me from the village. She clung to him and pleaded for him as no angel ever pleaded. Ah, how wonderfully she loved him. Her name was Alice Frohna, a daughter of a minister. She tried to appease wrath, but in vain. He forced her loose from him and rushed at me. I shot him and he fell. O merciful God, take from my mental vision the murdering scene of that terrible night. Thrice I had hurled the deadly bullet into his body to kill him; once at Washington, once at Rome, and now at this horrible scene. I hoped I had killed him, but he aimed at me again. I drew my gun to shoot him again, but, alas, too late, too late! The brave pleading heroine fell across her lover just as I pulled the trigger, and the whizzing bullet went crashing through her breast. I stood looking desolately at my victims and a faint sting of con-

science aroused a feeling of remorse in my heart, but I stood sullenly by and watched the beautiful girl die as the life-blood flowed from her breast. There was a satisfied smile on her face, as if she were conscious that she had saved her loved one. I had killed a beautiful, innocent woman. Any other time I think I could have rejoiced to see a woman die, so vindictive was my heart against them. But then, O God, how horrible! to behold the dying victim of my wrath; and she had been so innocent, so true, so brave.

"She sleeps out yonder in that lonely tomb." He pointed to the one lonely monument in the little churchyard, but she hid her face more firmly in her hands, and shuddered and moaned. She could have looked up through an open window and have seen the beautiful white marble shaft that marked her last resting-place as it towered in the moonlight, but she dared not.

"To ease my conscience I plunged into deeper depths of agnosticism, skepticism and atheism. I hated humanity and despised myself. I became a more helpless mundivagrant and roamed over the wildest and most savage portions of the world. I even went to Norway and sought my dear aunt and dragged her about with me from island to island, from continent to continent, across oceans, seas and deserts, in search of peace and ease of a bitter conscience. At last I became discouraged and came back with my aunt to 'Gethsemane,' where I found you whom I had lost so long ago. I found you here sorrowing, toiling and suffering without a soul to confide your deep broken heart to. Oh, child, I have studied you, I have tried

and tempted you to the extent of all my scheming power. All the while my love grew stronger for you. I tried to smother it, but somehow it lingered here in my heart forever. I determined many times to go abroad that I might forget you; but as I fancied myself wandering amid the ruins of some ancient palace or city far away a vision of one back at 'Gethsemane' called me back. I have struggled long and desperately, but when I have seen the vision of your dear face and your pretty, calm eyes I forgot all my hatred, all my remorse, in the one single great thought of you. Oh, darling, how I love you!"

He caught her in his arms again and whispered tenderly in her ear:

"My darling, forget my sins and cease trying to extinguish that love in your heart for me. Your proud nature must submit some sweet day, why not now? I will subdue it; I will defeat it; I will conquer it. Oh, yield it to my care, for I have learned to appreciate its value."

"But, Leland, I cannot, oh, I cannot!"

She sobbed violently and he felt her trembling in his arms.

"Oh, child, how stubborn you are. Oh, you will not take heed.

"Doubtless you conjecture that I am a treacherous Paolo Orsini, who would fold you, an Isabella de Medici, in my arms and secretly strangle you to death. But, darling, I will prove to you some day that I am gentle, meek and affectionate.

"After we had lived at 'Gethsemane' some time I learned of your visits to 'Lonely Vicinity,' and

of your proposed religious organization in that section. I tried to thwart your plans by depriving you of the privilege to worship in the old church which belonged to me; thinking, perhaps, you would hopelessly give up and prove your weak faithlessness which my vile heart wished might be true of you. I did not want to discover anything good in any one. But to my vexation you were courageous, loyal to God, and piously persistent in your labors. I was surprised and aroused to special interest in your proceedings. Many times I have secretly followed you there and watched and listened to your talks with those poor people.

"Now I have told you the strange story. I am Leland; Lilian is my sister; Mr. and Mrs. Dillion are my parents.

"It was Leland who built this magnificent basilica; and in my heart, though vile it may be, I dedicated it to the Lord and gave it to my darling, Mamie Homean, because I loved her as no man ever loved! Nine hundred thousand dollars is not the price of my love; but the awful atonement of my ruined dissipated life is only a meager price! Oh, Mamie, a love that endures through the fiery furnaces of hellish vices and savage sinfulness, and that overleaps all barricades of destroyed confidence and betrayed love, is a love that was born before eternity, that lives through all ages and that is from everlasting to everlasting! Oh, it is worth having. And now, when you behold this church, the work of my own hands, and recognize the sacrificial import of its significance as a typical atonement for my sins against God

and my intolerable rudeness and cruelty to you, could you not lay off that saintly robe of dignity and condescend to lift me, a poor dejected sinner, from the burning regions of hell, and save my immortal soul? Oh, spurn me not with disdainful treatment, but obey the admonitions and dictates of your consience and of your religious faith and bring me back into the fold of Jesus. I know that my life has been terrible, but, thank God, there is redemption! I was sorely tried. I tried to cling to His promises, but the mad waves of hell snatched me away. I saw I was hopelessly ruined and I cried out to the pitiless world that life was a mockery and that oblivion after death was the sweetest heritage. I cried out in the language of the lamenting Jeremiah: 'Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest, it crieth out against me, therefore have I hated it.'

"But I come back bringing a torn and mutilated heart, a blackened and scorched soul and lay it at your feet and wait for your actions to fix its doom for hell, or for you to take it up tenderly and offer it to Jesus!

"Oh, child, remember that if you contemptuously reject me I will stand at the judgment bar of God and with sinful gratification of my own doomed soul I will rejoice at the judgment of your own soul doomed to the same eternal hell because of your own obstinacy in rejecting and hurling me headlong into perdition. Beware! Beware! You can help me, O my darling! You only can rescue my perishing soul. Oh, listen to my pleadings. It was one apparently unfaithful message of yours that hurled me downward; and

now, one sweet message from you will bring me back to Jesus. It is not too late for me to atone. I can be of some good in this world yet; and if you will only trust me, help me and love me, oh, what——"

His voice faltered, his lips trembled, he bent over her, kissed her lips, and his tears fell thick and fast over her pretty brown hair and polished forehead and gently folded hands, significant of a holy, sacred repentance and of a baptismal christening of their united hearts. Again he stooped and kissed her trembling lips repeatedly and reverently, as one joyfully realizing the holy presence of a sacred spirit.

"Now you are my darling wife! And henceforth the damnable speculations of skepticism, infidelity and atheism shall be destroyed; I shall let the touch of your pure lips cleanse mine from all obscenity and unchaste expressions with which I have so long imposed upon the chastity and purity of mankind. I shall be redeemed through the precious wife of my own heart. Mamie, my own, my very own!"

As he strained her to his heart she would fain have yielded her heart to him, for oh! how loudly his poor heart called to hers as she heard its passionate beating against her face. But she thought of his cruelty upon the little brown bridge and she saw the spirit of poor Alice's pure soul looking down upon the benighted ruined soul of him who had murdered her. And in that gaze she fancied she saw the prophecy of Leland's eternal doom to everlasting perdition. Oh, could he ever atone? He was inhuman then; might he not be

again? What could she do when she might perchance fall a victim to his sullen, unrelenting wrath? She thought of the harsh words she had heard him utter to his aunt and how he had so often trampled upon her own feelings. Such an one could not atone, and to such a dangerous character she would not, could not, trust her life, however much she loved him.

"Oh, Leland, you cannot restore the precious life of Alice. She is murdered forever! You cannot make amends for the wicked blasphemy with which you have cursed God and mocked His divine creation, revelation and providence. You are a murderer, thrice a murderer! You tried to kill Alton Tolliver; you murdered Alice; and by your awful murderous life you have murdered my——"

She closed her lips and cried passionately like a broken-hearted child.

"Oh, yes, you mean to say that I have murdered your heart. Yes, darling, indeed, your heart is bleeding, but it will never die. My heart is bleeding, too, but it will never die. Come along with me; I want you to be my witness in the last event of my disclosing secret life."

He took her by the hand and led her up to the balustrade and there he stood as if listening to something beneath the floor. All was silent, and he touched a secret spring. Instantly a small door slided back and opened to view a descent of beautiful colored marble steps leading down into a dimly lighted cell. Quietly he helped Mamie down the steps into the strange dungeon. Though the cell was small it was adorned with the beau-

ties of a little palace. There was a little table over which draped a rich fold of snow-white linen. A large Bible lay open amid its folds and by it sat a beautiful golden candlestick in Catholic style. Leland led her on to the bedside of a pale, sickly-looking man, who was sleeping soundly, and began in low muffled tones:

"This is the last scene of my wicked handiwork. I have been candid and truthful, telling everything as I delieverd the narrative, and now I come to the crowning mystery of a wonderful revelation.

"This man is an archangel of infidelity; he is a forger; he is a thief; he is a kidnapper; and if he were endowed with more courage he would be a murderer! He taught me the awful destructive principles of hellish speculations. He tempted me to sin. He kidnapped me when I was a little boy and took me from my mother. I was heir to seven million dollars and he afterward affirmed himself as my identity and obtained the amount to which I was heir. I never knew it till years afterward when I overheard his conversation with another thief and bank-robber. I captured him, put him in prison, then afterward brought here to this mysterious prison. I constructed this cell just under the pulpit and brought him to it that he might hear the word of God preached.

"Mamie, I imprisoned him because he had robbed me of my inheritance and peaceful home; because he had darkened my soul and instigated his wickedness all over the world. And I intended to kill him some day! For four long

years he has been serving his penalty and now the moment has arrived that shall end his imprisonment. Mamie, shall I kill him or release him?"

Mamie shuddered; her teeth chattered.

"Oh—don't—don't kill him!"

Then Leland stooped and touched the sleeping man on the shoulder and shouted:

"O thou slumberer, awake and shake off this mortal coil of bondage and walk forth from thy prison-chamber a free man!"

Mr. Mathes sprang to his feet frightened, and looked vacantly at them both.

"Cain, devils, nymphs and Hades! Do not take me yet. Nitroglycerine, dynamite, why—er—ah—ahem! Why, is that you, Cain? Hast thou come to slay thy brother Abel?"

"Hush, be rational. I bring you pardon and freedom. Go forth from this dungeon; take this five thousand dollars and this Bible and be a better man henceforth."

He handed the astonished man the money and the Bible and pointed him to the door of the church. The man gazed at him with tearful eyes; then seizing Leland's hand he pleaded: "Oh, Leland, I have wronged you! I have treated you cruelly. Oh, won't you forgive me? Oh, hear while I plead. I may never see your face again, but I want to die with the satisfaction that my sins are forgiven me. Oh, will you grant me the pardon?"

Leland wept and pressed the hand more tightly in his.

"Mr. Mathes, we have both been cruel to each

other. I know you will pardon me for imprisoning you, and I know I am only too glad to release you and forgive you. Go on your way. I bid you go, be happy, be good."

It was, indeed, a pathetic scene to see two wicked, malicious hearts melt into a brotherly love. Mamie burst into tears and wept joyously, then sadly.

Mr. Mathes bade them farewell, and went silently away from his dungeon.

Leland and Mamie stood for some time in the profound silence. Then like the sound of Amphion's lyre Leland's voice sounded upon the midnight stillness and seemed to challenge the voiceless solitudes to outrival the effect of his tone:

"That man is Mirable Irving's husband. Ah, many a time that poor, broken-hearted woman has come to me and pleaded for her husband's freedom. That is why she came to 'Gethsemane' a short while back. She married him immediately after I deserted her. I took him from her and I was glad to see her broken-hearted.

"Now, Mamie, I have told you the awful story of my terrible life. I have withheld nothing from you. I know my life is a blackened, hideous waste, all strewn with the bones of my helpless victims; but, child, when you think of the blows that my senstive heart and soul have encountered you will not marvel at my awful desperation.

"Now, could I possess the deified and personified soul of some beautiful nymph it would not suffice to gratify my hungry and desolate soul. No, indeed, it would not. Eros lavished his enamoring affections upon his beloved Psyche,

and I, another Eros, have lost myself in love for you. But your obstinacy restrains you. Though I sink into the jaws of hell you would not drag me out. Though I plead with earnest, penitent heart you spurn me as you would Satan himself. Oh, Mamie, you wish me saved; you are weeping for me! Oh, won't you make an effort. Oh, come to me! Trust your heart to God, then come and rescue my perishing soul!"

He gathered her in his arms and strained her beautiful sad face to his throbbing heart. She felt the convulsions of his strong body and her heart almost forgot to beat.

"Oh, Leland, it is astonishing to me that you, so intelligent, would resort to the futile hope of obtaining your soul's salvation by me—who manifest such dreadful aversion for your unmanly untrueness and for your unfounded presumption and for your opprobious epithets against my sex. Oh, how do you expect me to ever respect you or trust you after you have boldly ventured beyond the bounds of courtesy? Oh, Leland, your hands are all stained with the blood of an innocent woman! and it seems that I can hear poor Alice's dying cry as you sent the deadly bullet through her heart. Oh, no! Poor Leland, I could not trust you now! Dear Leland, Jesus only can save you. Only trust Him, His 'grace is sufficient for thee.'"

"Oh, Mamie, it makes me shrink with unconquerable dread when I think of sinking into that dreadful, almost hopeless trial of humble repentance alone. Oh, darling, you must not leave me!" He was weeping passionately. "Oh, sweet

Mamie, come to my arms, my pretty wife! Come——"

He opened his arms and advanced toward her, but she sprang desperately past him, darted up the steps, and glided down a narrow stairway leading into the dark crypt below. She had thought of a door there by which she could escape and she soon left the wonderful basilica alone with its lonely occupant. Down she sped along the valley road leading to "Gethsemane." The long shadows of the woodland trees told that the moon had lowered its great golden shield far down the western skies. Mamie paused upon the little brown bridge to look at the blood stain where poor Alice was murdered and she clasped her hands and with bitter tears looked down upon the dull red blot and murmured with a sob:

"Oh, he was cruel then; he would be again."

She passed on.

Leland, the modern rejected Cain, wandered up to the beautiful marble balustrade and ventured to kneel for the first time since his downfall. Oh, if God would only hear him! Oh, if He would only lift His horrible wrath and be merciful! Oh, how he tried to plead! How he sought to be sincere and utter his heartfelt thoughts to God. But how utterly impossible it seemed for his wretched soul to make sufficient atonement. At last he rose in despair and looked vacantly up at the altar as if gazing hopelessly at his destiny. The full moon peeped from under a marble-like cloud and cast its ghastly light over him. He had extinguished the lights and was standing in the moonlight. He reflected, and memories confronted him like the

ghastly spirits of *Parcae* and all the goddesses of Fate who are fabled to preside over human destiny. His crime was finding him out; and his soul was writhing under its torture. He clasped his hands and cried out:

"O God, Thou hast branded me as a 'Fugitive and a Vagabond.' I am lost, lost, lost. My God, my God, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.'"

CHAPTER XXII.

MAMIE was in the drawing-room arranging some cambric that had been carelessly wrinkled on the table. She had brought a clipping of beautiful flowers and placed them on the table in a beautiful vase. When she had smoothed the cambric on the little table she took a spray of narcissus from the bouquet and looked sadly into its beautiful petals where lurked a single dew-drop. Her heart ached and bled for the poor wretched soul of the man whose sad history she had just learned only the previous night. In an adjoining room Lilian was picking a guitar and singing a pretty, sad, farewell song. And as the music came wafted to her on limpid waves of rapturous strains Mamie's eyes filled with tears as she looked vacantly at the beautiful flower she held in her hand. She thought of the beautiful Greek youth, Narcissus, who was unaffected by love till to punish him for his unfeeling heart Nemesis caused him to fall in love with his own shadow in the water. How sad his fate. He pined away till, when they came to bury him, they found only a flower in his stead. Though mythical it may be, it very well illustrated her sad fate. Though unlike the youth in being devoid of affections, yet how like his torture was

his desolate heart which suffered deeply because it could not reach the idol it had so long yearned for. Oh, could she but pine away till only her spirit would remain in the beautiful garden of heaven as a flower typical of her purified and sanctified soul. How much better it would be than to suffer this mortal pain.

The music ceased, and in a moment Lilian was standing by her governess with a radiant smile playing upon her face.

"Why, my dear governess, you have been crying. What makes you so sad? Tell me. Oh, it makes my heart ache to see you sad. I have been wanting you to confide your secrets to me a long time, but I was too diffident to ask you." She kissed her.

"I think I have been sad for many years, Lilian. Do not trouble yourself, darling. I will be all right soon. You know it makes one sad when they realize that they will soon have to bid farewell to the home they have learned to love."

"Why, we shall not leave till after Christmas. So cheer up and don't be so melancholy."

"Oh, yes, Lilian, indeed, I must go away to-morrow. I cannot remain here any longer. I have reasons which compel me to leave immediately."

"Oh, so soon?"

"Yes, I must be off to-morrow for the land of the benighted heathens. You shall accompany me as far as Washington, and there you will find your parents just returned from the East. I have written them that we will be there the latter part of this week."

"But you surely—Oh, there comes Mr. Cain."

Before Mamie could detain her Lillian had glided into the recess in the bay window over which draped the rich folds of satin curtains.

Mr. Cain came into the room with the usual haughty air and with that cold rigid expression on his face. His eyes gleamed sarcastically and his voice rang with irony:

"When Bacchus and Lucifer proclaim a feast, their vigils may become intoxicated and cease to keep watch over their sleeping gods. Nebuchadnezzar and his people, in their height of gaiety and revelry were destroyed by the skilful Medo-Persian Army which crept into Nebuchadnezzar's beautiful city of Babylon by the way of the Euphrates River, which had been carelessly left out of its course. Intoxication was the weak link that connected their glory with their doom.

"But I have kept vigil over my fortresses for these many years. I have kept my mind clear of all infections of carelessness and negligence, and it has been strengthened by rigid experience.

"I come to you with a question. Did you ever think that Leland Burnett would be rejected by the Lord and cast away as a *'Vagabond of Nod'?* No, no, child, you never dared to entertain such a deplorable future. Nevertheless, I am the Leland Burnett who was a good pious Christian boy, but now is a fugitive turned away from the beautiful city of God. Often have I thought, when alone in my gloomy meditations, of the pure sweet spirit of Lilian Dillion and of the many happy hours we have spent together in holy Christian converse. Only God knows the many times I

have wept to think that my terrible life would keep me forever from her. And how much more terrible and painful was my sorrow when I learned that she was my sister—my dear, sweet little sister. I would to God that I could take her in my arms now and tell her that I am her brother—that little brother that was taken away when he was just a child. But I cannot, oh, I cannot! Oh, the blessed child would be so sadly disappointed to know that I, so vile, so wretched and so cynical, am her brother. O God, spare her the mortification."

Just then the curtains rustled, a trembling wail issued from behind them and then stepped forth the trembling child, Lilian, whose beautiful face was white with sudden sorrow and whose eyes gleamed with a strange delight mingled with sadness. For a moment she stood before him in speechless wonder, then fell upon her knees and threw her arms around his neck and cried:

"Oh, Mr. Cain! the long-lost Leland—my own dear brother! Then I can love you now with a fearless, shameless, everlasting love. Oh, I can hardly realize that the dear boy who taught me to love Jesus is my own dear brother. And, O Leland, why are you so cold-hearted and sinful? You who once were—" He smothered her words as he pressed her face against his heart. His passionate tears fell upon her beautiful tresses while a holy silence fell over the room.

Then she gently drew away from him and placed her trembling little hand in his.

"Brother, do you love me?"

"Yes, sister, I have always loved you. In dis-

guise I have endangered myself more than once to get only a pleasant look at you. When you would have scorned me with bitterest disdain had I told you that I was your brother.

"Lilian, I have suffered, but

"'*Oh, the sweet reward of dangers past!*
How lovely, through the tears
That speak your heart's overflowing joy,

your sweet love and affections appear. The world has been cruel; I have been stubborn and obstinate; but, thank God, I am myself again."

Mamie left the room quietly, leaving Leland and Lilian alone. Leland briefly told Lilian all his sad history of his sinful, gloomy life.

It was raining a little when Burnett rode down the avenue from the stables and stopped in front of the mansion's front door. He was talking in undertones to Paix. Mamie watched him from an upper window and a deeper, stranger yearning than she had ever felt before seized her heart, and she burst into passionate grief. Soon that beautiful face, that commanding form and those passionate, magnetic eyes would go away forever and she should see them never more. She looked long and earnestly and the bitter tears streamed over her cheeks as her passionate heart beat sullenly and pleaded for its idol. Oh, she felt that she could not give him up forever.

He smiled for a moment, then his handsome face grew more stern, till a strange pallor, the signal of defeat, and a deeper unknown anguish, crept across his features. As if conscious of her

eager yearning gaze down upon him he looked up and smiled persuasively.

"Mamie, won't you come down and tell me good-by before you go away?"

A sweet smile was her response, and soon she was holding his hand, paying her parting respects to him whose wretched heart possessed hers, though it be

"Crushed in its ruins to die."

"Good-by, Mr. Burnett."

Her eyes were full of tears in spite of herself as she looked into his, which were only brilliant and tearless with a tinge of hope still lingering in their passionate depths.

"Good-by, Mamie. You have my hearty wish that the result of your mission to the heathens will result in much good."

"Thank you, Leland. I certainly appreciate your valuable interest in my success."

"I have already spoken my parting words to Lilian; and now, my beautiful black Canadian, carry your master to the gaming regions of the wilds; for there he seeketh to rest him in the deep tranquillity of its voiceless solitudes. There his depraved spirit findeth temporary satisfaction."

He touched his black steed on his arched neck and soon he was traveling down toward the Babylon gate.

Mamie watched him till the woodland hid him forever, then turned sadly away.

The carriage was soon ready to carry the ladies to the village station, where they were to board the train which was to carry them away.

It was a severe trial for Mrs. Harwell to bid them good-by; yet she came forward and kissed them and caught them in one long embrace.

Then they hurriedly got into the carriage and were driven away. As the carriage was about to disappear around the woodland they signaled a farewell with their handkerchiefs, and "Gethsemane" disappeared.

The weather was inclement, and the first few days of their journey were very disagreeable. But during the latter part of their journey, and especially east of the Mississippi river, the weather was bright and pleasant.

When the train arrived at Washington, Mr. Dillion was there with his carriage, waiting to receive them and take them home.

We can only imperfectly imagine how great was their joy at meeting.

Having trusted his daughter to the care and teaching of Miss Homean he was filled with much joy to meet her once more. Not every great gentleman will trust his precious child to one so unknown as Mamie was to Mr. Dillion, without some doubtless degree of evidence that she is trustworthy and honorable. Hence his special joy at greeting her. A short drive found them at the old home, and after they were once in the house another scene of felicity ensued. Only those who have been mothers know the joy there is in meeting a precious sweet child who has been absent so long. Mrs. Dillion experienced such happiness when she once more clasped her darling child to her heart.

"Oh, Lilian, my child, heaven could not make

me happier than I am to see you. Why, child, you have grown so beautiful. The mountain climate must be wholesome for you. Just look at those fresh blushes on her cheeks, and oh, those charming dimples."

She then turned to Miss Homean, and scarcely less was the display of happy greeting with her.

"May the blessings of heaven rest upon you. You have transformed my child into an angel. You have not lost the loveliness that graced your person when you last resided with us. But, child, there is a strange pensiveness in those beautiful brown eyes; what sorrow is it that lurks there? But perhaps it is the weary of your long journey that makes you look that way. Be seated here and let's indulge ourselves with a delightful conversation, and after a while I will have the maid to show you to your rooms."

Then an hour or more was spent in the way suggested. After a while Lilian became indifferent to the conversation and sat quietly as if dreaming. Mrs. Dillion watched her and she saw tears slowly gathering in her eyes and her lips moved as if she were about to say something.

Lilian looked up presently and caught the earnest, sympathetic gaze of her mother, and she smiled.

"Mamma, I don't need the maid to show me to my room. I haven't forgotten my dear childhood home yet. I want to go alone. You may entertain Mamie while I am gone."

Her voice uttered these words in a low, clear accent, and amid the venturing tears a charming smile was shining.

She left her mother and her governess in the drawing-room and softly stole her way across the corridor to the staircase, which she ascended like a nimble-limbed feline. She paused at the head of the stairs to listen to the melancholy song which she heard an old servant, Aunt Julia, singing in the dining-room below. It was an old song that she used to hear sung before she went away to "Gethsemane." She brushed away the tears that trickled down her cheeks and went on into the room where she had spent so many happy hours with Leland as they talked of Jesus and his love. She fell upon her knees by the little table where she had bowed so often to pray. She wept and prayed for Leland; she prayed for her governess; she prayed long and earnestly that they might be rescued from the perilous catastrophe that was sure to devolve upon them. There she held communion with Jesus and indulged herself with the sorrowful meditation of memories of her dear, wicked brother. It was an hour of mingled bliss and bitterness.

It was some time before Lilian ventured to tell her mother the strange story of Leland. It was a pretty, clear morning when Lilian told her the sad story. The mother was astonished.

"Tell me, Lilian, where he is. Tell me all. Oh, do not deceive me! Is my little child still alive?"

"Why, mamma, his own testimony, confirmed by other convincing evidence, proves that he is indeed your son—my brother. Oh, mamma, I have known him for a year or more and I have learned to love him. But I did not know that he was my brother till a short time ago. Mamma, he is so beautiful,

but he has fallen into the depths of sin. He has been so cruelly treated and it has caused him to grow wicked. He has a wonderfully cultured intellect."

"Oh, Lilian, tell me where he is?"

"He is the man who owns 'Gethsemane.'"

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, quite sure, mamma. He has been terribly wicked, but he loves my governess, and her pure guileless soul has touched his hardened heart; and now you ought to see him cry when he realizes that he can never claim her as his own. He knows that the affection she entertains for him is stronger than death, but she has denied him the happy privilege of sharing her love. My governess is obstiuate in her refusal, and I am afraid Leland will sink deeper into sin in his opelessness. Mamma, we must pray for him while he lives alone in his far-away secluded mountain home. He has no hope to sustain him. Since he has lost his loved one he feels deserted, lost and ruined forever."

Mrs. Dillion was silent. Her precious child still lived. When should she see him? Why had he estranged himself from his dear mother so long? Would he come to her if she sent for him, or would he feel as one afraid to encounter the reproachful eyes of a good mother? All these questions entered her mind while she wept. Lilian caressed the mother's face as it lay upon her bosom and she tried to console her with tender words of endearment, but the sorrowing mother continued to weep bitterly.

"Mamma, he has not always been wicked, for

he is the man Leland who resided with us when I was a little child, and since then he has been a confirmed mundivagrant over the face of the earth."

The mother listened with pain and anxiety while Lilian continued the strange sad story of Leland's life. When she closed the narrative she said in a far-away, dreamy tone:

"Mamma, I loved him when he lived with us; I loved him when he taught me the story of Jesus; and I love him, oh, Jesus only knows how much, yet."

They were silent. Lilian looked through the window and saw the bend and rebend of a blossom. How soon its beauty would wither under the blast of coming winter. How surely its brief existence and imposing beauty and its inevitable fate were typical of human life!

CHAPTER XXIII.

MAMIE was on her way back from Chicago, where she had been visiting one of her old schoolmates who had left Nashville to reside in Chicago. She was looking out through the car window at the rare landscapes that flitted past her, and she thought how soon she would have to go away on her mission to the heathens. It was so sad to part with loving intimate friends, but she always tried to overcome the sadness with the enthusiastic anticipation of the pleasure she would derive from her labors among these benighted people. What a thrilling inspiration it would be to be able to point out to some benighted soul the blessed Christ, the Saviour of the world. As she was to take charge of a class of pupils in one of the prominenet schools for training the children she would rejoice to have the blessed privilege to take their tender lives into her charge and, as if caring for some particular collection of delicate flowers, train them up to live beautiful Christian lives.

These were the thoughts that made her heart glad as she journeyed to Washington.

Mr. and Mrs. Dillion were waiting for her at the depot when she arrived, and they took her into their carriage and started swiftly home.

"Lilian is crazy to see you, Miss Homean," said Mrs. Dillion, as they turned into Pennsylvania avenue. "She has something to tell you."

"Delightful news, I hope," answered Mamie dreamily. "I would rather you would call me Mamie, Mrs. Dillion. We are old friends, you know."

Mrs. Dillion smiled and murmured dreamily: *"Mamie, Mamie,"* then turned to the governess and kissed her. "I have always wanted to call you by that sweet name."

They were silent some minutes. Mamie loved the good woman because she was Leland's mother. Now Leland's mother would call her Mamie. But she was sad somehow; why? She sighed and lifted a book which she had brought along with her.

"I have a copy of Longfellow's poems which I shall present to Lilian to-morrow as a birthday gift; you know she will celebrate her fifteenth anniversary?"

"Yes, the dear little child is anticipating a happy celebration."

The carriage stopped and the party stepped out, and while Mr. Dillion gave the driver orders to put away the horses and carriage Mamie and Mrs. Dillion went on into the flowery lawn that stretched out a narrow margin in front of Mr. Dillion's beautiful home.

Mamie was somewhat disappointed, for she expected to meet Lilian running to greet her. Instead, all was silence in the great house.

They met Ruth coming to them with swollen eyes and a look of horror on her face.

"Oh, Mrs. Dillon," she cried, "she is gone, gone——"

"What is the trouble, Ruth? Who is gone? Tell me quick!" demanded Mrs. Dillion with great anxiety and astonishment.

"Lilian is gone! O, the sweet child Lilian! He took her away—Oh, she'll never come back!"

Mamie and Mrs. Dillion looked at each other in amazement.

Mamie ran off into Lilian's room to find her there; for surely it seemed that she would be there to welcome her.

"Who took my child?" cried Mrs. Dillion fiercely with a dark angry look in her dark Indian eyes.

"Oh, Mrs. Dillion, I didn't know him. He had his face masked. He rushed into the room where Lilian was reading and took her in his arms and held her fast till he got into his closed dark carriage with her, then he drove off down the street at a wild gallop. Oh, she's gone! My sweet little playmate. Oh——" she sobbed bitterly.

Mrs. Dillion, filled with rage and distraction, hurried about to find Mr. Dillion whom she found in his library and she briefly told the horror to him. Then in a few minutes the news was flying over the city as fast as electricity would transport it. This done, Mr. Dillon hurried away to make preparations for a thorough search for his child. He entertained the hope that it was a case of kidnapping; for then he could easily pay the price of redemption for his child. But if she had been stolen maliciously without mer-

cenary purpose he knew that perhaps he would never see his child again.

Mrs. Dillon fell into a swoon, so great was her distress, but Mamie managed to revive her at last, and when she looked up at Mamie she smiled sadly.

"Mamie, we may never see her again, but I am satisfied that wherever she is taken, whatever influence she may come under, and whatever pain and suffering may torture her, she will never, no, never, forsake the Christ which Leland and her good governess taught her to love."

Mamie could not restrain the tears that strove to fill her eyes when she thought of the poor stolen child, and the mention of Leland's name touched her with painful memories and over the mournful past her grieved heart wandered like some weird phantom wandering along the dreary shores of haunted seas. While she thus viewed the sorrowful past, she saw love stabbed to continual bleeding by the cold steel dagger of modern infidelity and skepticism, and though "Love is stronger than death," her heart with one other was sacrificed and lay bleeding upon the altar of a wretched life.

She looked at Mrs. Dillion with a look of more than earthly pain, and answered as only hopeful Christians can answer:

"We shall meet her up yonder in the sweet by and by. And Leland——? Oh!" She fell down upon her knees sobbing violently. Mrs. Dillion caressed her and endeavored to sooth her, but she sobbed and wept on.

When Mamie first knew that she loved the man

whom she knew then as Mr. Cain, she knew that her love was useless and hopeless, and she had endeavored to strangle it; but her efforts had been in vain. And now, would she make one more effort to forget the handsome face, the magnetic eyes of that powerful man of "Gethsemane"? Oh, could she do this? No, no, it was foolish to entertain such an idea. She must be resigned and live on through this vale of tears and loneliness till she should be gathered up among the angels.

Day after day passed and the lonely father and sad, broken-hearted mother heard no news of their child. But Mr. Dillion indulged in the most extravagant hopes that the child would be rescued, while the mother apprehended something serious would happen to the dear child, and that there was no probability of her return. She had been bereft of one precious child, and now some stealthy demon had stolen the only child she had left to make her life happy.

Meanwhile, the day arrived for Mamie to make her departure for the far-away land of paganism. After the necessary preparation, she joined the Foreign Missionary Society at M——— and after a few hours sailing she found herself looking out upon the wide unbounded prospect of ocean waste. She saw the deep-green crested waves roll placidly away to a distant horizon which seemed to sink into the dark unfathomable ocean.

One day she stood upon the deck and was looking at the skies and the sun; for they were the only things of nature with which she was familiar. The green waters which spread out beneath her feet to distances unknown was something unknown

to her. It filled her with vague apprehensions of danger.

She looked up from the deep ocean and looked at the sun again as its rolled its luminous chariot far above land and sea. She gazed at it and a series of wandering pleasant thoughts flitted across her memory. That sun was the same friendly sun that had shone upon her in a country where the days lasted weeks and weeks; and it was the same sun that had shone upon her while she wandered a friendless being over the plains and mountains of Australia; and when she sat watching its many-colored reflections and spectrum on the leaping waters of the Katoomba falls.

While she gazed upward a large white bird sailed slowly over from the rear of the great ship and seemed to flop its wings in ecstasy over the deck where she stood; and as the great ship plowed its way onward through the waves, this great bird kept its position and distance over the deck. Mamie wondered at its strange movements. And yet there was something familiar about it.

It was a strange bird. She asked some of her friends what kind of a bird it was, and they informed her that it was the great sea albatross. Mamie looked long and sorrowfully at the great white bird. Soon tears began to trickle down her cheeks as her memory drifted back to sweet childhood when she roamed the field and the forests, over hills and valleys, and along the banks of the grand old Cumberland river, with her beloved Royal King Felix as her only companion. Many happy days they had played together around that

beautiful old home, now so far away. She thought of Mr. Homean's workbench, the old woodshop, the little spring down near the river, the large spreading apple-tree down near the brook, and the old cistern that stood by the front entrance. All these memories made her sad and yet there was a strange sweetness about the sacred memory.

The great ship steamed on nearer and nearer to the shores of Oriental land of Paganism.

* * * * * * *

After the lapse of nearly a year what might be going on around hidden "Gethsemane" and with its lonely master, his aunt, and his friend Paix?

Poor old patient Mrs. Harwell went her daily round rendering her daily services. Her fine flock of Norwegian sheep and her yard of excellent various-blooded chickens and many other curious and beautiful fowls were her objects of greatest pride and care. Her life was indeed a life of sadness and loneliness since Mamie and Lilian had gone away. Yet, in her loneliness, she did not fail to notice the great change that was coming over her nephew. Hour after hour he would sit by the fire in the sitting-room and while Paix would be jabbering lively with Mrs. Harwell as she would be embroidering or knitting fine hosiery, he would be gazing into the fire as if some great burden were bearing down upon his mind.

The people of "Lonely Vicinity" continued to worship in the great "Temple of Ariadne." By this time a strong and progressive membership had been organized. The Sunday-school, which

Mamie Homean had founded, contributed a large amount every Sunday to the Missionary Fund.

Mamie had appointed a young man, Mr. Omar Lindauer, to succeed her as Sunday-school Superintendent, and under his management the Sunday-school continued to make rapid progress. He wrote Mamie every month, informing her of the success of "Gethsemane," and all of its surroundings.

It was a beautiful night in September, and the lurid sky hung her mysterious host of twinkling constellations above slumbering hills and valleys. The moon lingered far out in space like a haughty monarch of the universe. Its effulgence was the same soft, mild, still light which it always yields to the darkened earth, and it served to dispel the darkness of this particular night.

"To-night the lonely master of "Gethsemane" and his friend Paix sat upon an old time-worn stone bench on the top of that high peak which overlooks the village, the "Gethsemane recluse," and the "Temple of Ariadne."

They looked down the gloomy distance and through the mystic maze of moonlight the white outline of "Gethsemane" could be faintly seen. In the far distance the village electric lights shone like a thousand lowered constellations hovered over some sacred place. The great white campanile of the Temple stood out against the darkness like some frightful ghost of dark-hollow-night origin; and far down the slope to the left a few pale lights shone glimmeringly in a few homes in "Lonely Vicinity"—a few only who labor till late hours and some who prolong the

telling of legendary tales till these dreary hours.

Leland and Paix were conversing in that low tone that awes one as if some dark secret were being revealed.

"It is this way, *mon cher*. I am a rambler and it is the spirit of adventure that has led me over rugged dark mountains and through wild dungeons and unfrequented places."

"Perhaps that is true, Paix; but doubtless you are aware that I have wandered over the world more than you have. It was not the spirit of adventure, however, that pushed me out, but a restless spirit was driving me mad and I endeavored to flee from it, and I was driven by it over the world, a confirmed mundivagrant."

"*Mon Deiu!* hopeless, restless spirit driving you mad?"

"Yes, Paix. I have never told you, though, never mind, I will tell you some day."

Leland went slowly down the steep mountain to his home. The cool midnight breezes hummed away among the autumn leaves and the moonlight spread out before him like some elaborate expanse of extravagantly diffused silvery sprays. The mournful voice of a whippoorwill fell upon the wafting breezes and its melancholy strains seemed to harmonize with the dreary, lonely, grief-stricken impulses of his aching heart. He at last made the descent and entered quietly into his Babylon gate. Only his fierce dog disturbed the perfect hush with his deep basso-re-pieno bark at his master's intrusion.

As Leland was about to step upon the granite doorsteps there stood his aunt in the doorway.

"Why, Aunt Nettie, why are you out so late?"

"Child, if you knew how often I have stood here in this doorway and waited and watched and listened, aye, prayed for your returning footsteps, then you would realize why I am standing here to-night."

"But you should not expose yourself in such a manner. Why, I always return; and if I should not return some time, what would it matter? I am only a frail member of this mysterious existence and I think it would gratify the heartless desire of the Fates if I were to fall a victim to their wrath some time while I am taking my nocturnal predatory raids and scouts. Come, auntie, you must not tarry here longer."

He took her arm and helped her up the steps and into the house.

Leland went into the neat little room which had formerly belonged to Mamie. He kissed the little pillow where her sweet face and beautiful brown tresses had lain so many times in sweetst slumbers. He stood there and wondered at its beautiful draperies and its costly furniture. All these beautiful furnishings had been arranged by Mamie. As he stood thus observing he thought of the beautiful soul that once enjoyed those luxuries. Even her presence had made it a holy sanctuary. The very air seemed as if it were the sacred realms of heaven.

He took a seat in a chair by the little table and bowed his head over the place where her Bible had lain many a day. He began back at the earlier days of their association and carefully, and with mingled pleasure and sadness, rehearsed in

his memory every good event, every good word, and every noble act of her life. Somehow he began to weep—he knew not why—and continued to weep till his broken heart felt relief. For more than an hour he remained in this bowed attitude. Was he praying?

The moon was fair to-night and its light streamed in upon him. Perhaps it was the holy hour of spiritual mediation and communion. His dreary heart and desolate soul suffered agonies too great for feeble words to express.

As he sat bowed in silent anguish his distressed spirit could have cried out:

"O, restless heart and fevered brain! unquiet and unstable,
That holy well of Loch Maree is more than idle fable!
The shadow of a humble will and contrite heart are o'er it:
Go read its legend—'Trust in God'—on Faith's white stones before it!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

One beautiful Sabbath morning the silvery rays of the moon seemed to linger over the dewy altars of the mountain. The tiny moonbeams silvered the foliage of the dense mountain silva, and rapturous strains of music burst from a thousand tiny silvery throats. The white spotless lilies bent and rebounded with perfect grace as the breezes passed them; the narcissus and hollyhocks nodded under their burden of dew; and the fragrant roses smiled through their dewy tears. All nature seemed to be awakening to the beauties of a new day. That morning exhilaration that pervades the dewy landscapes and inspires the early traveler with nature's wonderful thoughts now brooded over hill and valley. The crimson canvas of the Orient spread out its sheet across the eastern skies; and soon there appeared the burning orb of the sun over the horizon line and the whole world woke with the gladness and the song of a new bright Sabbath day.

At nine-thirty o'clock the happy Sunday-school band had gathered promptly and cheerfully on time. There were about two hundred enrolled besides officers and teachers. And it was a happy band indeed.

The organ murmured the last receding note of

the sacred opening hymn and the school bowed while prayer was being conducted. When the prayer was concluded, lo! the great master of "Gethsemane" and builder of the magnificent basilica entered and walked slowly down the aisle. As a compliment as well as a display of cordial welcome, the organist sounded a brief prelude and wandered off into a sweet pathetic welcome refrain as he walked like a king down the aisle and took his seat in an empty pew. This was the first time he had visited the Sunday-school since the memorable day when he was touched by the holy spirit that shone in the beautiful face of Mamie and his dear sister Lilian when they sang and played the beautiful sacred songs of Jesus and his love.

The close observer looking at him as he sat in his pew could discern that a peculiar change had come over him since the day of the dedication. Yes, a change had begun its altering work; but that gloomy, desolate scowl still lingered on his brow.

He listened with bowed head to the beautiful songs of the wonderful inspiration of the lesson; and its golden text stole into his desolate soul. It lingered in his mind and he heard its sacred echoes repeated over and over again in his heart.

"Blessed are the pure in heart."

When Sunday-school was over the Superintendent announced the presence of Mr. Cain, the owner and architect of the beautiful basilica, and cordially requested that he should address the Sunday-school.

For a moment Leland was bewildered. He hesitated; then as if a divine call had come to him, he

rose from his pew with an impulse of inspiration and faced the audience. Many months, aye, many years had passed since he had stood the last time before a vast audience and preached to them the divine exultations of his divinely spiritual soul. Then he delighted in it and felt free to speak his great thoughts. But now! He was a desolate wretch whose very perverted presence profaned the sanctity of God's house. Why should he be expected to address such an audience?

He began at first with calmness but soon he almost broke down. The unparalleled kindness of these people overcame him. He wept while he talked and he could hardly control his voice. He had not thought that such kindness could exist in the hearts of men.

From an humble, sad, contrite tone he drifted higher, and his face began to shine as if catching the lustre of a wonderful inspiration. His soul seemed to cease holding converse with commoner thoughts to catch a strain of something celestial and fly away on fancy's wings to hold communion with the glorious majesty of things sublime.

The audience was breathless while he spoke. His eloquence was grand; his imagery was wonderful to contemplate. He painted picture after picture of the joys and beauties of life till the whole glad earth would feign have shouted the praises of his masterful language. He told that Love was absolute king of all kingdoms and would reign forever. He continued his grand discourse for more than an hour; and when he ceased, he bowed to the audience, and hurriedly left the

church. A loud and enthusiastic cheer and applause praised him with expressive approbation as he huried away. He hurried toward his home with a heart beating wildly with a strange enthusiasm. He could not tell why he had yielded to that call to talk to those people. He was bewildered and felt glad that he had spoken. But he hurried on till at last, Oh fatal memory! he paused upon the little brown bridge and looked down upon what? The dark clouded stain where issued the blood of an innocent heart—the victim of his wrath. He fell upon his knees and bowed his face to the ground. O could he ever pray? How hard his heart seemed. His very soul seemed dead; his thoughts seemed to be desperately centered upon the awful scene of murder, and instead of seeing one faint star of hope—the light of everlasting life—he could only see that dreary ghastly spectre of a murdered woman. He could repent and had repented; but how could he ever approach his God? Could he ever make sufficient atonement? While he spoke to the Sunday-school congregation his soul became happy as it had been in other brighter days. He forgot his awful crime in the joys of the occasion; but now this dark blood stain mocked him and his soul lost all its sweetness. God seemed to withdraw from him there; the world seemed to retract with disdain; the sun and skies and all the glories of the day frowned and scowled over him; and nothing dared to venture near his polluted person except the reproachful, grim, ghastly spirit of the woman he murdered.

He remained in that penitent posture for more than an hour, then raised his head and looked va-

cantly about him. His face was pale; his eyes shone with a feverish light; and that habitual scowl rested above his brows.

He rose to his feet, drew his hat down over his eyes, and wandered away toward "Lonely Vicinity."

CHAPTER XXV.

After two fortnights of absence, Paix returned to "Gethsemane." His keen eyes still retained their mischievous sparkle; and he joined the family circle again with his wonderful stories of adventure.

Meanwhile he never became so absorbed in his exciting narratives as not to notice the wonderful change in his friend Cain.

Leland had kept secret the sweet story of his redemption, as if it were too sacred to reveal. But his manner of living slightly disclosed a change of some kind.

Day after day went on in untiring journey. The sweet summer was gone. The last few days were calm and tranquil; and all nature slumbered and dreamed in perfect peace under the all-pervading influence of the sedative Morpheus. The little mountain creek seemed to creep over the falls, as if afraid to disturb the calm repose of the slumbering landscapes. The dull murmur of its fall could scarcely be heard. It flowed on through the valley tardily, loitering with the sunbeams that shot their piercing fire-spears into its bosom.

One of those quiet evenings, near sunset, Leland reclined in his easy chair, reading the Nash-

ville *American*. He was sitting on the front portico of his splendid mansion, where he could allow his eyes to wander occasionally from the paper and to look out upon the western landscape where the brilliant sun poured from his burning beaker streams of ineffable effulgence upon the dreaming world.

The sun neared the horizon, and paused on the brow of a distant hill, seeming to linger entranced at the low, gentle requiem that murmured among the breeze-swayed branches of the Rocky Mountain forest.

A pleasant memory broke upon Leland's mind: he thought of the olive brow of that Palestine hill where he had stood one late afternoon, watching the setting of the receding sun, which was perhaps just then rising over the hills of "Gethsemane."

He thought half-dreamily of the beautiful, sweet, pensive-faced girl he had met long ago by the little spring. He lifted his hand to brush away the tears, when he caught sight of a carriage drawn by two white liveries coming hurriedly across the little brown bridge. It was lost for a moment behind a clump of trees in a small hollow; then in another moment it halted at the Hades gate.

The fierce dog leaped and snarled and howled fiercely around the stake to which he was hitched. Leland dropped his paper into his chair and hurried down to the gate to offer them a welcome to his home if they so desired. When he had opened the gate, the driver inquired of him: "Sir, is this the 'Gethsemane' mansion?"

"Yes, sir," was the cool reply.

"Then I have brought some visitors who desire to lodge with you as guests for a few days."

He paused a moment, then resumed: "I hope there will be no intrusion on their part?"

Knowing the strange seclusion and privacy for which the beautiful hidden mansion had been revered, the driver entertained some probability of an intrusion. Cain smiled amusedly as he glanced at the rear of the carriage.

"Why, certainly not, my friends. I shall be glad to have you in my home. Get out; I cordially welcome you."

The curtains were drawn back, and two ladies were assisted from the carriage; then the gentleman accompanying them stepped out.

"My name is Herman," said the gentleman as he shook Leland's hand. "May I ask yours?"

"Cain is mine," responded Leland.

"Of course we are delighted to have met each other?"

"Thanks, perfectly."

Mr. Herman turned to the ladies and presented him to them with the common formula. Cain remarked: "I am pleased to have such distinguished guests as you all with me. I know your wife and you by your distinguished position in the professional world, and I know Mrs. Dillion by her marked and noted superiority in the ranks of society."

The company bowed in grateful appreciation of his complimentary recognition of their titles, and followed their host into the house. On enter-

ing the drawing-room, Cain found his aunt, to whom he introduced them respectively.

When Mrs. Harwell's eyes met the tearful, happy gaze of Mrs. Dillion, a sudden recognition flew into her memory, and she threw her arms around Mrs. Dillion's neck and cried out, with exceeding joyfulness in her trembling voice:

"Oh! Annie! My only dear sister! Have I found you at last? Can it be that you are yet alive?"

"This is Annie. There is surely something wonderful in the love and tender mercies of God, for through His kind providence we have been permitted to meet again. O, blessed be His holy name for this happy meeting!"

They remained in each others' arms for only a short time; then, with one affectionate kiss, they withdrew and took their seats with the others. Mr. Herman entertained them with his well-selected humor and wit, and the moments went swiftly, while supper was being prepared for the tired travelers.

Cain enjoyed the pleasant jokes of his noble guest, and laughed and talked gleefully with him; the ladies chattered away in their all-important conversation.

Once Cain stole a glance at Mrs. Dillion, to find her earnest gaze fixed upon his face. He reverted his glance to beautiful Mrs. Herman, and his face flushed. After a short time he departed to his own quiet chamber. There he sat in his easy chair, with his head bowed on one hand, which shadowed his eyes. There he meditated and pondered. What strange motive brought

his mother to his own home that he had kept hidden from her so long? Did she really recognize her own son? Yes, he was sure she did. But why had they sought his lonely habitation?

He had been estranged from his mother so long that scarcely did any of his childhood affection for her remain. But now, since he had caught the sweetness of her loving eyes again, his heart began to cherish fond memories of the day when she wept over him and kissed him, with that never-dying love for him in her heart. Her gaze at him in the drawing-room lingered with him, and he thought of other happier days when such fond looks made his little heart glad; and as he mused on he began to love Mother again. He wept. While he thus sat pondering, a servant came to his room and announced:

"Mrs. Dillion wishes to see Mr. Cain in her room."

He arose, closed his chamber-door, ascended the tall spiral staircase amid all its glory of a thousand darting reflections. Quietly he opened the half-open door of the apartment, and entered. Mrs. Dillion reclined in a chair with her back to the door, and was unaware of his presence till he stood in front of her.

He fell on his knees before her and, kissing her hands repeatedly, cried passionately:

"O mother, I have been wicked, but I have come back to Christ. Will you accept me as your son?"

Tears gathered in the proud mother's eyes, and she arose and drew him gently to her bosom and kissed him.

My son Leland, I have always claimed you. Oh, I would to God that you had never been thrown upon the cruel world. O Leland, do not leave me again. Oh, I am so lonely! I have no one to comfort me."

Cain looked into her passionate, weeping eyes, in which he could depict a deep but unknown anguish. He wondered what she meant.

"Where are father and sister? Are they no solace to you?" he asked, tenderly.

For a moment Mrs. Dillion could not speak. Her body shook with emotion. Then she told the sad story of her lost child—how she was kidnapped and carried away. Poor Leland, this was a terrible blow upon his sensitive nature; but he strove with mighty Christian power to suppress the raging spirit that had run riot so long. Again he was tempted to disbelieve the mercy and existence of God. His inspiring Ebenezer seemed to crumble; and his vexed spirit struggled to cry out, "Hitherto the Lord hath cursed me instead of blessed me." But at last he was conqueror.

When his mother had finished the sad story, he said to her in a faltering tone:

"Mother, I loved that child with a love that only the angels know. I have lived with her about two years, and I know that she has a spirit sweeter than the angels. I knew that she was my sister. She learned to love me, not as a lover, but with a love which she herself could not explain. She endeavored to keep her little childish affections as her own sacred secret, but I knew that she loved me; and at last, through chance, she learned that I was her brother; then she flew to

me, threw her arms about my neck, and exclaimed in glee, 'O my brother, I can love you now!'"

Mother and son talked on for some time, bringing up tender, sacred memories, and exchanging those affections which bind mother and child together in a unity that can never be broken.

The summer-like night passed away, and the next morning was spent pleasantly in the drawing-room.

Cain was alone in his room, earnestly meditating the sad loss of his dear sister. He wept and prayed and mourned pitifully over the awful misfortune. He determined to find her at all cost. The moment his guests were gone he would bid farewell to old "Gethsemane," and go away in quest of her. He would spend his great fortune and devote the remaining portion of his life in search of her. He had pledged his wealth and life to God; but he could never see the accomplishment of his new purpose now since this sad misfortune. He was sad and gloomy in the thought that life would perhaps be forever fraught with painful misfortunes and destitute of the glorious Christian work he had so fondly cherished. As these thoughts touched his heart, he could scarcely suppress the tears that strove to fill his eyes. The evening was sad to him. He felt that perhaps he had been cruel to his mother by staying away from her so long. It was evident that she had been informed that he still lived immediately upon Lilian's arrival in Washington; and who knows the anxiety of a loving mother who is longing to see her precious child who has been lost so long? And now, Lilian gone, she

had come to him, unable longer to bear the suspense.

He rose and went into the parlor, where the guests were enjoying themselves in delightful conversation.

"O mother," he thought, as he entered and looked at her once with tender yearning, "surely Parcae and Moerae, the mythical goddesses who preside over human destiny, have turned their hand of destruction and misery and sorrow upon us; for since the beautiful, cloudless morning of my youth, which was soon overshadowed with the gloom that has forever hovered over me, life has been a martyrdom to live!"

After the ensuing night had passed, Mrs. Dillion entered Cain's reading-room, to which he had repaired for a few moments. She began to plead:

"I have come to you, my son, seeking your beautiful face once more, that I might grow young again. I want to beg of you to go with me and help me find Lilian. Now you must obey me through love. Mr. and Mrs. Herman will reside here in this beautiful home and make your Aunt Nettie happy while we are gone. O Leland, my child, do not refuse me this one request!"

"Mother, I am going away to-morrow, and, God being my helper, I shall some day find her and bring her back home again. But you cannot go with me. Your health will not admit of it. You must remain at home, and, with trust in God, wait patiently and faithfully till that happy day when she will be brought back to your bosom again."

"But perhaps I could help in some way. Oh,

if you would only let me go! I cannot stay alone and——

"Absurd!" he interrupted kindly but firmly. "It would only terminate in the destruction of your health. Mother, you must not go."

"But she might be in the hands of some cruel villains who would not give her up," she persisted; "then I might intercede and influence such to take pity and relinquish my child."

"Never fear, mother; I can rescue her. It is a mistake for you to think of making such an attempt."

But the mother persisted, and without further argument they repaired to their respective apartments.

Sanford, the hired boy, came presently with the morning mail, and as Leland unbound it and separated his mail from the other, he noticed one letter addressed to his aunt. He knew the handwriting. It was from Mamie. His heart beat with painful throbs as he thought of Mamie, and then of the barriers that separated them forever.

He bundled up his aunt's letters with her journals, and bade the boy deliver them. As he reclined in his chair, looking over his mail, he stopped to listen and hear his aunt reading Mamie's letter to Mrs. Dillion and Mrs. Herman.

Leland learned that Mamie was accomplishing a great work among the heathen, that she was happy in her work, rejoicing in the hope of eternal life. She said that once in a while a sad and painful memory would overshadow her happy hours; then after the relief that comes from the shedding of tears, all was contentment again.

The sweet letter closed without one single mention of his name. This wounded his sensitive heart. Well he knew what painful memory touched her restless spirit.

He pressed his fingers to his aching eyes and throbbing temples. His memory traveled back over the cobble-stones of his past life; and here and there through the darkness and gloom through which his despondent life had passed, he saw and remembered the moments of brightness when the sunshine of Mamie's pure soul fell upon his, buried in darkness, and left, implanted there, words of comfort, consolation, inspiration, sympathy, counsel and admonition, helping him on to a purer life. It was her pure life—these bits of sunshine—that had brought him back to Jesus. He thought of the sentiment contained in the little clipping of poetry he had found one day in her Bible; and he felt that the suggestion in it had not failed of recognition by the governess.

A faint smile settled on his features, and half whispering to himself, slowly and dreamily he repeated the favorite poem:

"The human heart as a garden is,
In sorrow's storm and drought of loveless years,
Rank weeds of bitter doubt and discontent
Spring up where seeds of strength and larger aim
Would faint and fall for lack of sustenance.
But yesterday, at your right hand there lay
Some fallen soul wherein a timely word
In years to come might burst to rarest bloom
And thrill the world-ways with its redolence;

One cheering glance, one sympathetic smile,
One friendly touch of closely clasping hand,
Might lift some struggling soul from deepest depths
Of sorrowing, and make it strong to strive."

Ah, yes, it was her friendly touch and timely words of admonition that had lifted his struggling soul from its deepest depths and made it strong to strive.

The day passed on. While Leland's trunks were being packed to be sent on ahead to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, which he intended to make his headquarters, Leland took his friends over to the magnificent church, and told them the secret of his purpose in building it. They were impressed with its imposing grandeur. Mrs. Dillion's tender heart broke down, and she wept passionately as she thought of the bitter trials through which her son had passed.

After seeing the church, Leland took them to a place where they could see "Lonely Vicinity," Mamie's first field of labor.

It was a day of sadness to all. Yet they forgot their sadness for a while as they enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the landscapes that spread out before them in the dim blue distance like the flowery meads of Sicily, and the picturesque scenery of the mountain sides and valleys were not less enchanting.

At night the skies were dark with the shadows of threatening rain-clouds. Host, hostess and guests retired early, that they might sleep and rise early to bid farewell to Leland and his friend

as they started away. At three o'clock in the morning the rain began to patter briskly against the window-panes. The bright days were over.

A half-hour later, the master's voice rang through the house with orders to the driver. The carriage was soon ready, and the time for parting had come.

Mrs. Dillion folded her son in one long embrace, and pleaded to the very last that she might go with him, but he firmly refused to let her take the risk.

"Good-by, mother, I will bring Lilian back by and by. God will help me to find her."

The parting was painful, and Paix drew him into the carriage, took his seat beside him, and ordered the driver to proceed. The night was dark, the wind howled and sobbed through the valley; and the rain came down in torrents.

Leland looked out once to see through the heavy rain the dim outline of "Gethsemane," and the light from the chandelier in the hall threw its cold, brilliant light far out upon the darkness. When he saw the last glimmer vanish in the distance he groaned and a half-suppressed sob escaped his lips.

After some days, Leland and Paix were lodging at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. There they intended to part, each to search alone.

There Leland met Edward Linden, and after a short conversation Leland told Edward of his intended trip. He asked Edward to go with him, which he at once agreed to do.

Edward Linden had been a sadly disappointed boy all his life, and was a type of a lonely wan-

derer. He had traveled over a great portion of the world. His education was extremely extensive, and his wealth immense. A strange fascination whispered ever to his lonely heart of the memory of Mamie, whose marvelous beauty had captivated his soul with a never-dying love. He was one of those men who could hardly forget.

Paix boarded a ship bound for Brazil, and soon he was again on the bosom of the deep, as he had delighted to be in days gone by.

In a short time Leland and Edward were moving toward the Orient, and America was left behind.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was one of those lovely evenings whose tranquillity and perfection of loveliness touched every uncomely scar on every building with the plastic, transforming hand, and made them seem perfect, flawless and fairy-like.

The moon looked down through the crystal sea of electrical effulgence, and saw humanity flooding toward St. Peter's Cathedral. Tradition, with its quaint, dubious whisper, tells us of St. Peter's Cathedral as a sacred monument built over the tomb of the Apostle Peter. It is supposed to stand where it stood in the primitive days of 306, the famous basilica erected by Constantine and Helena.

At this particular hour of devotional services there stood Mamie Homean upon the great main entrance of the magnificent Cathedral. She was about to speak to one of her pupils, who had come over with her from Siam, when she noticed her pupil shudder. They had been looking out over the splendor-lit scene, where the fairy lights danced nimbly over the circular basin pools into which the lively fountains showered their crystal sprays, and where the tall monument which stood in front of the Cathedral cast its shadow down

across the beautiful, flawless, smooth pavement like the shadow of a sentinel guarding the Vatican and the sanctity of the great basilica.

"Why, La Veda, why do you hide your face with such a look of horror?"

"Indeed, 'tis horrible to remember. Ah, well I remember the terrible cruelty that my eyes witnessed one day when I was only a little child nine years of age. I came here with papa to witness the execution of the victim on the guillotine. Oh, may I never see such cruelty again! It was just such a golden-lit stone pavement as that which lies out yonder under the vast flood of light that I saw a curdling pool of his blood, where it had trickled down over the destructive guillotine. Ugh! the wild, ghastly memory haunts me now as I look at the soft light of the pavement spread out before us."

Mamie sighed, and caressed the troubled brow.

"Child, you must not think such terrible thoughts."

Just then she turned her head slightly, and saw the figure of a man standing against one of the great columns. He was standing with folded arms and his hat drawn over his eyes. Mamie looked at him closely. Her face grew pale and her lips blanched. A figure strangely like Alton Tolliver presented itself to her mind as she looked at him.

She leaned forward with eagerness to observe him more closely. The man moved away as if he disdained such scrutiny; and for a moment he was lost among the incoming crowd. But just as they turned to go into the sanctuary they met

him again. It was Alton Tolliver. His face was a fiendish visage, and his eyes were hard and pitiless. Mamie shrank from him.

Alton approached her, fixed his fiendish eyes upon her; and for one moment they stared each other in the face. Then, with one shrill cry, he drew his revolver and fired one shot at Mamie. She fell backward on the floor, insensible.

The heartless villain leaped from the Cathedral like a frightened tiger over a wild mountain boulder, and escaped through the crowded city.

The frightened pupil fell upon her knees and bent over her chaperon, crying in deepest despair. Soon a crowd had gathered around the insensible form. After sufficient investigation she was carried to a quiet little boarding-house on the banks of the Tiber.

For several days the unconscious form lay on her couch with few signs of life. The ball had penetrated the breast and ranged near the heart. She was cared for with the most skilful, tender nursing, Signora Czolflin, the good lady of the house, ministering to her with all the tenderness of a mother.

The sorrow-stricken pupil was carried back to her home in Siam. Before Miss La Veda went away, they inquired of her the name of Mamie's relatives. But she was unable to tell. In answer to their inquiry to Mamie's having any special friend she said:

"I heard her speak recently of receiving a letter from a lady friend in America, and in that letter she read the information that a gentleman named Mr. Cain had sailed for Liverpool. She

said that Mr. Cain was an intimate friend of hers."

She could give no further information.

The long, solemn hours passed away, and no indication of recovery was perceptible. The physicians had become wearied, and had exhausted every remedy. A deep, hopeless gloom brooded over the beautiful Italian home.

Signora Czolflin had written a notice to Mr. Cain in Liverpool, and he was expected at any time.

The unconscious woman seemed to sleep motionless in the depths of painless suffering.

It was not till several days after she was wounded that she seemed to move. The bright sunset glow of a tranquil Italian evening was streaming into the room where the patient lay suffering. Signora Czolflin was sitting by the bedside, as she had been doing night and day since the wounded missionary had been brought to her home. She was aroused by a groan, a short moan, from the unconscious woman's lips. She rose and bent over her to listen. She saw a smile on her lips, then she heard her murmur something indistinct. For several hours she continued in this way. Now and then her bony hands would grab at something in the air, then fall back helpless upon her breast.

A servant came into the room quietly with a card, handed it to Signora Czolflin, who saw that it was from Mr. Cain.

"Go and admit him at once," she said to the servant.

Soon Leland was resting in the drawing-room,

impatiently waiting to be taken into the room where he might see his loved one. The moments seemed centuries to him. Every noise at the parlor door sent a thrill through his body, as he expected every moment to be requested to visit the sick room.

At last Signora Czolflin entered the drawing-room, bowed with exquisite Italian grace; and after making acquaintance and having a brief conversation with him she said:

"Mr. Cain, I learn that you are an intimate friend of Miss Homean?'

Leland smiled, and his face slightly flushed.

"I am at least well acquainted with her."

"We have informed you of her serious illness because we could not ascertain any of her relatives; and it was only through one of her pupils that we learned of your acquaintance with the lady."

"You will please tell me why, where, when, how, and by whom she was wounded?"

The hostess then explained everything as she understood it, stating that the unknown assassin had escaped. She noticed the flash in his eyes and the scowl that darkened his brow from temple to temple.

"She is seriously injured?"

"I think so,—probably will not recover."

He breathed quickly, then his heart seemed to cease throbbing. The light in the room died away, and he seemed to be whirling through a vast volume of blackest smoke. The mocking words, "probably will not recover," chased him with hissing wings, stabbing its talons into his

heart. He hid his face in his handkerchief for some minutes; then he raised his tearful eyes to the lady, who read all the meaning of his intimate friendship with the missionary. She knew that he was anxious to see the wounded girl; and, moved by pity, she rose and said:

"Would you like to see her a moment? You have an exclusive right to see her, as you are her only acquaintance."

"Certainly. I would consider such a privilege from you as an act of supreme kindness."

"Then we will enter quietly, though the slightest disturbance or the greatest alike have failed to arouse her."

As they entered, the last glow of the setting sun lingered in the room, its glory seemingly gathering in a golden halo over the face of the sufferer. Leland stood at the foot of the bed, looking in speechless agony at the girl of his life-long hope. Her face was turned toward heaven. Though the lines of terrible suffering could be plainly seen upon it, there rested a sweet but sad smile about the corners of her lips. The expression on that sweet, pensive face told the story of a secret suffering that none but Leland could understand. He had seen that face so often when her heart was dying slowly and hard with deepest mortal grief.

He took a seat by the bedside, and looked long and pitifully at his sweetheart. Was she dying? Would the Lord be so cruel as to take her from him? He began to weep. Signora Czolflin wept, too—she could not suppress the tears. Leland then spoke in tenderest tones, but a broken voice:

"She was the only hope that sustained my lonely life. She was the idol that survived all the wreck and ruin of my soul, and now, amid the wild waste and upon the ashes of my destroyed happiness, I see this beautiful idol crumbling, dying, dying at last! O Lord, may Thy grace indeed be sufficient for me!"

His face was turned toward Signora Czolflin, and he felt a warm touch upon his hand, which was resting on the pillow by Mamie's head. He turned to look, and lo! a face full of the purest love was smiling upon him—a face so lovely that it seemed to have procured its beauty from the angels. Tears were in her eyes, and she looked at him with bewilderment. She understood who was in the room, but why was she so helpless?

She had been dreaming, perhaps, of the man whose familiar, magnetic voice had awakened her. It was like the bursting of a rosebud into full bloom amidst the glory of a cloudless dewy morning to see her awake from her long sleep. The voice fell upon her ear, touched it to thrilling, awaking joys; but she was confused. The room was strange to her. She could recognize only the magnetic voice of Leland.

She swept her feeble hand across her brow, as if to clear her confused mind; then the horrible face of Alton appeared before her, and she remembered the glittering weapon and the dull, death-like report of its destructive discharge.

Leland looked at her in speechless wonder. He took the little hand and lifted it to his lips, and his warm tears fell upon it. Signora Czolflin stole quietly from the room. Leland dared not

speak to Mamie lest the conversation would cost her severe pain, so he continued to hold her hand and weep.

After a short pause she withdrew her hand and burst into bitter tears. Poor Leland, how his heart ached to see her suffer. The strong heart was at last broken and was seeking ease in a flow of tears.

Then her voice broke forth in a pitiful wail:

"Oh, would it not be better to die than to endure?"

"Dear Mamie, what is troubling you? I cannot bear to see you suffering so! Oh, will you tell me?"

She looked at him wistfully, then shook her head and turned her face to the wall. After a moment she turned her face toward him, and asked: "Why should you care so for me? Do you still love me? Have you never learned to forget me?"

"No, darling, a thousand times, no! I still love you, and if there is any truth in woman's eyes you still love me as surely and truly as that evening star looks down on us. Think you that, though I were banished from the civilized world and forced to exist an exile in the heart of that fabled land where no female dares to tread, and where Penelope and Lucina are never known, I could ever cease to love you? No, darling, my love is my whole life!"

"Leland, you must forget me. When you go away you must turn your heart to some other comforter. O Leland, try to forget me!"

"Mamie, dear, I know what it costs you to say

those words. Your heart clings to that love which it has always cherished for me. Oh, how long will your conscience stand up to do battle with your struggling, passionate heart? Your wonderful conscience is a frightened Patroculus; but, ah, child! some day, ere the sun of your life shall have set, your heart, the unconquered Hector, shall be the conqueror, and Patroculus shall fall a slain victim at the feet of Priam's and Hecuba's valiant offspring—the bravest of the Trojans. Ah, child, you will remember some day that my prediction is true when I say that the terrible struggle, the bloody combat, will terminate in the downfall of your obstinate judgment."

A tremor swept across her pale lips and a shudder shook her delicate form. The power of his personality startled her, as it had done oftentimes before. She had hoped that his prophecy would be false, but now some strange sensation told her that her destiny was sealed. She closed her eyes. Ah, how she loved the man who had uttered those words! Oh, if she could only open her heart to him who longed to hear the sweet story from her own lips.

She opened her eyes again, and looked at him with an appealing feverish gleam of bewilderment and pain in them.

"You will soon go back to America," she said dreamily, "and I will never see you again in this world; but tell me, oh, tell me, will you meet me up there where my mamma and your Saviour and the angels are singing the anthems of heaven? Oh, my dear Leland, will you teach your heart

to seek the Christ who died for your wretched soul? Think no more of me, and if you so live here you shall see me there; and there where our souls, sanctified, shall wear the beautiful white robes of heavenly purity, we shall meet never to part. Oh, it seems to me that heaven would be empty if I should not find you there! Here a bloodly gulf divides us, but yonder, oh, yonder! O Leland, for my sake, meet me on that happy golden shore!"

His strong body trembled, and he seized her listless hand and kissed it repeatedly. Ah, that bloody gulf! Could he ever span its depths of crime? He could never forget it; could he ever overcome it? He pressed the little hand passionately, and pleaded:

"Dear child, tell me what your heart is dying for? Oh, say one sweet word, say 'Leland, I love you.'"

She smiled sadly and shook her head.

Her eyes closed and the soft silken lashes lay in the crystal tears on her pale cheeks, and she went away to dream.

Leland sat there for some minutes, with his face buried in his hands. His heart was sinking. He rose, kissed the listless hand, and noiselessly left the room.

That night he rested on a small couch in a neat little room on the upper story. The night was still. From his position he could see the moonlit haze which brooded over the Tiber as it flowed noiselessly through the ancient city. As he looked out upon the scene he thought of his lost sister. Where could she be to-night? Was

she slumbering and dreaming in some happy home; or was she lying in some dingy confine, dying of hunger and savage treatment; or was she already sleeping in death with the gloomy shroud of the tomb about her? Beneath him lay the precious jewel of his heart, slowly dying of a serious physical injury, together with the dying agony of a grief-stricken heart. What had he in this world to sustain him? Hour after hour he brooded over his life of misfortunes.

Day after day passed away, and the wounded woman began to recover slowly. After some time she recovered enough to go about, but was far from being able to resume her missionary work. It was not likely that she would ever be able.

She went about the famous old city, observing its wonderful things of interest, and gathering knowledge from the actual observation of those things about which she had read that she might have a better conception of Roman customs, both ancient and modern, and ancient Roman traditions.

It was her custom to visit the Vatican often. She went often to the grand old Coliseum, to see its quaint, artistic construction, and to think of the ancient festivities that had occurred within its powerful walls. Many a spirited steed had clattered his ringing hoofs against that old beaten track that circled through that great amphitheatre. Many a whizzing chariot wheel had sung the wild, enthusiastic song that filled many a Roman heart with frantic enthusiasm. Many a wild, mad, raving halloo had beaten the air with its savage heathenish echo there. All these had

occurred hundreds and hundreds of years ago, yet the wonderful old Coliseum remained an awe-inspiring relic of those ancient festivities. But time had begun its decaying work upon its massive walls; yet its decay had scarcely been perceptible. Many years men had been quarrying material from it to build churches, and yet no marked deficiency could be noticed in its walls.

She found scarcely less interest in visiting the ruined, crumbled palace of Nero.

She visited many points of interest, beguiling the lonely hours as best she could; yet she had no dear friend to make her weary life less burdensome. Leland had left her and gone away to the gloomy fiords of Norway. She was treated kindly, but those strange Italians were not like her intimate friends.

The physicians had refused to grant her request to return to America, as her health would be then destroyed forever. So she drifted about through that peculiar Oriental society week after week.

One night, when the sky was clear and the moon was shining bright, a strange impulse seized Mamie. She rose from the reclining chair in her boudoir, threw a heavy wrap about her shoulders, and stole quietly out into the night.

It was not far down to the river, so she was soon on its bank. She stood by the rippling stream that now and then broke over the pebbles at her feet, and began to weep. She was sad and weary. Life seemed "but an empty dream." Her broken heart sought ease there where she could hear the murmur of the river and could see the myriad host of constellations occupying the far-away

solitudes of the unknown universe. These scenes were a solace. Here she could perhaps forget; or maybe, in some way, the burden would be lighter.

She looked heavenward, the tears streaming down her cheeks. She thought singing would allay the pain of sorrow, so her beautiful lips parted sweetly, and from the depths of her rich pure spirit floated these tender lines in that sad Andante refrain (Wilcott):

"O what is life? 'Tis like a flower
That blossoms and is gone;
It flourishes its little hour,
With all its beauty on;
Death comes, and, like a wintry day,
It cuts the lovely flower away.

"O what is life? 'Tis like the bow
That glistens in the sky;
We love to see its colors glow;
But while we look, they die;
Life fails as soon; to-day 'tis here;
To-morrow it may disappear.

"Lord, what is life? If spent with Thee,
In humble praise and prayer,
How long or short our life may be,
We feel no——"

She paused. Could she truthfully say the other? Yes, when one is on the Lord's side it was so. She concluded:

"We feel no anxious care.
Though life depart our joys shall last
When life and all its joys are past."

The last lingering echo died away upon some distant hill, its pathos seeming to linger to the last dying sound.

She sobbed bitterly, and as she buried her face in her hands she heard the voice of one, *Leland,* fall pathetically upon the dying echo of her plaintive melody. Ere she had time to look up, he was upon his knees by her side, kissing her little hand and baptizing it with his tears.

"O Mamie, it is killing me to see you suffering so! Oh, I cannot bear it!"

"I am not suffering much, Leland. I am just feeling a little sad this evening. Leland, do not trouble about me." She dried her tears and smiled—ah, so dreamily sweet.

"But, Mamie, darling, I caught the trembling, sorrowful tone of your dying heart as you sang that song, its pitiful tenderness telling me, as it has always done, that your poor heart is broken."

"You know, Leland, that I am not like other girls. I know I am strange, but I cannot help it. Of course, you are not surprised at my coming out here; you know it is one of my whims."

"Yes, darling, you are very different from other girls—so different that there is not one in this wide world so good, so lovely, so sweet, so altogether beautiful!"

His voice was full of deepest passion, and his face was so bright with the inspiration of his love

that Mamie shut her eyes with a faint fear and dread touching her heart.

"It pains me to see you grieve your life away because you cannot claim me as your own. I know, dear Leland, oh, I know how sweet it is to love! But, oh, how bitter it is to be turned away from that love forever! Forgive me, dear Leland, when I tell you to go away and think no more of me. O Leland, I sometimes think that if I were dead and turned to ashes you would forget and be happy."

"No, Mamie, I can never forget. When I rise to unknown worlds, probably the only relic of my dreary life will be my everlasting love for my darling Mamie. O Mamie, your love for me is killing you. Won't you come to me, love me, freely give your tender, pure life to me, be my darling wife and love me forever?"

She smiled sadly and wistfully and shook her head.

"Mamie, my sins are washed away. I am redeemed. You cannot dare to hold anything against me now, since God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven me. Won't you come to me now?"

She looked at him with speechless wonder in her tear-dimmed eyes. If an angel had descended from heaven and had announced the happy news she would not have been more astonished. Yet she could not doubt it. Leland was sincere. After all, her prayers and hopes were not in vain. She was so happy. Her face revealed it; and Leland caught the significance of her shining countenance. But only for a moment; then a deep,

hopeless shadow darkened her brow and her eyes again filled with pain.

"I must, once for all, say *no*. Think you that I could unite my destiny with a man whose life is stained with the blood of an innocent girl, who fell a victim to his cruelty in an evil hour when his heart was raging with savage, merciless anger? Oh, how soon would I be murdered at some evil moment when your relentless passion would be hurled at me? You may be saved from your sins, and I trust that you will meet me in heaven; but here I could not trust you. I shall never be your——"

He placed his hands to his ears, and would not hear her last words. He rose from his position and hurried away.

She looked after him in bewilderment. He was soon lost in the distance; was he gone forever? She felt that the last hope that sustained her frail life had gone out forever. Her lips quivered, the moonlight seemed to grow dim about her, a chilly sensation crept over her, and a sob from the deepest depths of her despairing heart choked her. If he went away and took his own life, would she be responsible for his ruined life?

For more than an hour she sat mute. From her inmost soul she cried to God to be merciful to him. A death-like anguish crept over her. She started up alarmed, staring about her in wildest frenzy. Her senses became confused.

She looked down the river and saw two Italian skiffs floating about on the still water at their place of mooring. She went hurriedly to them,

unfastened one of them and entered it. Slowly and carefully she plied the oars and was soon on the bosom of the deep stream. She glanced one despairing look back at the receding city, then turned forever from it, saying feebly: "I am going home to Mamma—" Her voice died away like a fainting echo. Her strength was exhausted, the oar fell from her powerless hands, and she fell insensible in the boat.

Ah! What cruel fate! Love is stronger than death, yet it drives the dying heart to despair.

The boat drifted on with the tide. Some wanderers who were out till late hours in the night saw the boat, but no occupant, so they turned away carelessly to their sports. On, on, it drifted past cottages and hamlets and farms, while the poor girl lay unconscious in the boat. The big, bright, golden moon had lowered itself so near the horizon that the long, slanting beams of light fell against the sides of the boat and left the woman's figure in the shadow. As the ripples of the stream grinned at the breezes which fanned them, the moonbeams silvered their glistening crests with fair touches of purest light.

When the night was far spent, the boat had drifted far down the stream. Far down the river a small white bulk could be seen against the black background of the dark distance. Its movement could scarcely be noticed except by repeated observations. But after some time it drew nearer, and the figure of a man was visible, standing in a small boat as if trying to ascertain something about the stray shallop in which Mamie was sleeping, and which was some distance from his

boat. He was not alone. He was accompanied by a dwarfish, kinky-headed man. The latter rose after the other had resumed his seat, and with a spy-glass scanned the universe with the air and dignity of an astronomer. He took it from his eyes and shook his head gravely. His ugly face winced, and he batted his eyes dubiously.

At length the man concluded that the distant object was merely a floating piece of loose timber, so they turned their boat about to return, as they had intended to do.

Soon they reach the large ship that floated at anchor at the river's mouth and were soon on board.

The dwarf paused on the deck to scan the heavens again, then said in a muffled tone: "By the power of Loki! methinks it might be likely to bring up a terrible storm."

About an hour later, the dwarf leaned over the railing and glanced down into the water. His sensitive ear caught the sound of something making a sharp grating against the side of the vessel. He leaned further out to ascertain what it was; then he drew back and gazed with astonishment. He turned to run below to inform the captain, when the latter appeared on deck.

"Hick ah valla von dika! Most noble Amphion, I have seen the wife of Morpheus! Come! She is as fair and white as the purest snow on Iceland's snow-crowned yokuls. Come this way and see her."

He beckoned to the old man with an air of profound solemnity, which summons the old man obeyed. They looked down on the object at which

the dwarf pointed. After a moment the captain took a unique souvenir from his belt and kissed it in ancient reverence, then kissed his silver-tipped spear.

"By the gods, thou hast well said, my lad. For surely it is a sleeping goddess. And there is a loveliness about her that reminds me of Feruzzi Madonna."

The old man looked again, and saw the wandering skiff in which poor, frenzied Mamie was floating away. She was lying just as she had fallen, her face upward. The reflection of a thousand stars bejeweled the water about her, and she seemed to be dreaming amid the glories of a new paradise.

"Here, my lad," said the old man with a pleased smile on his face. "Let's fetch her on deck—it is a wandering maiden."

Soon they managed to take her on board, and the old man looked long and earnestly at her. Tears trickled down his cheeks as he bent over and kissed her sweet lips. He lifted the beautiful diamond-bead necklace suspended about her neck, and looking at the inscription on it he smiled pleasantly.

He gazed at the heavens and scanned the old ocean far and wide. He shook his head and fondled his gray bear dubiously. The gray dawn had begun to creep over the world, but the southern horizon looked sullen with a series of long gray and blue clouds just above it.

He turned to the pilot and ordered him to set his compass for the far-away North. He returned

to the girl he had found, and kissed her hand and said dreamily:

"It is Fjonkon, my Fjonkon! Hick ah valla van dika!"

Mamie went away, and the missionary could hear no more of her. "Lonely Vicinity" lost her. Her dear friends and loved ones finally lost all hope of ever seeing her again.

* * * * * * * *

After a long, long, earnest but fruitless search over nearly all parts of the world, Cain and Edward Linden returned to New York. There they rested a few months, when, at an enormous cost, Leland purchased a handsomely fitted pleasure yacht. A few weeks later they put out to sea again for a pleasant voyage of a few months in northern latitudes.

It was a beautiful day when they steamed out of the harbor. That day their voyaging was pleasant; and when the great luminary of day had gathered all his glory unto himself, the soft glow of a lovely-tinted twilight lingered over the rippling waters. Soon the moon was looking down upon the snow-white polished deck of the aristocratic yacht. Leland sat upon the deck-railing, conversing with his friend Linden. Now and then his eyes wandered dreamily out toward the shore of traditional Nova Scotia's banks smiling with beautiful meadows. Edward Linden puffed the blue curls of smoke from his lips as he lazily smoked a delicious Havana. Below them Paix was strumming a prelude on the piano. This was Paix's last night with his friend Leland, for he meant to leave the yacht at the first coaling-

station. When all was quiet, they heard a sweet voice coming over the water from a small cottage on the shore. It was a maiden singing that beautiful pathetic song whose immortal title is, "In the Sweet By and By."

It was late when the gentlemen retired; then, after all was quiet again, Leland crept back upon the deck, and there, where only the stars could see him, he knelt and his spirit went up to God in prayer.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"The waters warbled and gurgled
Like the lips of long ago."

—RILEY.

A SUMMER landscape!—but not like those sedative, mild landscapes that enhance the lands of a more temperate latitude. Yet the scene was a beautiful one. It was a long slope of green meadow which ran down to the sea to be kissed by the wavelets, and a kiss of the midnight sun. The gentle breezes sang no song; not a bird's melody could be heard in the tree-tops; and Nature whispered not a word. Only the ripples on the shore broke the strange silence as they "Warbled and gurgled like the lips of long ago."

Away in the distance great mountains stood out against the sky like grim, ghastly monuments. Their snow-capped summits grinned like wild haunts of the undiscovered.

Here and there a small islet peeped up out of the water, a few tall pines clustered on its surface, crowning it with a wreath of evergreens. A few flocks of eider-ducks paddled about them,

diving now and then after their food; while others slept in the midnight sun, with their long broad bills hidden under their downy wings.

Across a broad glen, on another sloping meadow, grazed a great herd of sheep.

It was a strangely beautiful land. A fascinating diffusion of romantic peace was its most winsome charm. The smile of a new paradise touched it with a rare beauty and a loveliness supreme. The inspired poet might well say that this was indeed "Paradise Regained." It was tranquil, serene, in its wild romantic glory.

The rosy hue of the midnight sky seemed to flash brilliantly at intervals, touching ten thousand tiny wavelets with purest ruby tints. Each series of wavelets ran with its "ripples shod" with the sunshine of an arctic midnight. It was a brilliant midnight. What a strange land!—a land whose landscapes are never entirely free from ice and snow; whose waters never cease from icebergs; whose skies for weeks are never without a sun.

The scene changed again, and for a moment the dubious flicker of the heaven's light trembled violently; then the whole eidouranion of the universe was a flame of the ruddiest glow. It remained this way only a fleeting moment, then its ruddy glow faded to opalescent tints, then a pearly gray crept over the sun.

There was one person, Edward Linden, who observed these scenes with speechless wonder. He had been standing upon the meadow with his seismometers by his side, and with a tattered, torn, dingy booklet in his hand (which he had

found near the pebbly beach), when he noticed the glory of the heavens and paused to gaze upon the pageant scene. When the brilliancy of the heavens had faded to a pearly gray, he resumed his perusal of the mysterious book he had found. With a puzzled frown he managed to read, with some difficulty, the origin of man in the Icelandic language.

"Humph! An extract from the old Icelandic Bible, I suppose," he musingly conjectured. Without further perusal of the pamphlet he put it into his pocket, then proceeded to make his experimental test with his seismometers to detect and register the quaking and tremors of the earth for which Iceland is so noted. But detecting only the slightest perception of an earthquake he put away his instruments, spread out his rugs upon the shore, lay down on them to rest and to observe the sky in its changing colors.

While he reclined he fell asleep and dreamed of a new and strange love. It was more beautiful than he had ever realized. In his sleep he smiled. He fancied he heard a pure, rare voice echoing through the reverberating forests and over the resonant waters. Slowly it drew nearer to him, till it at last stood by him and smiled, while tears of joy stood charmingly in her beautiful eyes. Her charm was irresistible, and he was extending his arms to take her to his heart, when suddenly he awoke to see a large ember-goose circling gracefully about just over him. He still heard the sweet voice, this time in reality, but faint and dreamily far away.

He rose to a sitting posture, took his gun and

fired at the goose. The grand echo galloped swiftly over the distant hills and hollows, then died away in an unknown solitude.

Edward listened till the echo was nearly hushed, and presently he heard the sound of the stray echo of that sweet voice he had heard in his dream. He was entranced. There was a strange sweet pathos in its melody that he had never heard in any other voice. "That it was the voice of a maiden, I am sure," he said to himself, "though it was far away."

He laughed "to think what a fool he was"; his laughter returned to him in a grand echo; then as it murmured faintly in a distant ravine, again he heard the enchanting melody of the invisible enchantress in sweetest harmony blending with the receding echo.

He thought of himself as the unfortunate Narcissus, allured by the enchantress nymph, Echo. At last he fell in love with that voice. It contained a quality of a new and rare pathos which responded to the dreariness of his lonely heart. Before he knew it, he found himself advancing toward the charming voice. On, on he went, passing beautiful little lakes where the eider-divers lined the shores with their downy plumage and where the soft, delicate pansies grew in profusion. He passed sulphur pools here and there, the like of which he had never seen; then he discovered roaring geysers around which he fain would have lingered through curiosity, but that voice called him on.

Suddenly the voice hushed, and he paused to wonder if he were really awake or simply a som-

nambulist. Just then a gentle breeze swept in from the sea and awoke the slumbering landscape to a more delightful existence. It was one of those sedative breezes so favored in Iceland, which come in from the Gulf Stream whose waters contain the warmth and vigor of thousands of people who are blessed with its advantages.

It is remarkable to think that if it were not for this Gulf Stream, Iceland would be a vast bleak iceberg, standing like a grim monster-ghost haunting the wild cold seas of the North with desolation. But there is a blessing in it, and during the short, wild summers there is no place half so beautiful as the meadowed and flowered shores of Lonely Iceland. Her long, changeless summer days are touched with a wild and rare radiance such as no other land can boast, and one is thrilled with a strange rapture when rapt in its gleaming, consummate beauty. "In that strange island, Iceland—burst up, the geologists say, by fire from the bottom of the sea, a wild land of barrenness and lava, swallowed many months of the year in black tempests, yet with a wild, gleaming beauty in the summer-time, towering up there stern and grim in the Northern Ocean, with its snow yokuls—mountains,—roaring geysers—boiling springs, sulphur pools and horrible volcanic chasms, like the waste, chaotic battlefield of Frost and Fire"—one finds his beau-ideal of a supremely delightful land of varied scenes and varied curiosities, wild adventures and rare, pleasing romances. On the seaboard of this wild, strange land, or island, is a margin of grassy country where cattle and sheep

and reindeer can subsist and where Iceland's Danish populace subsist by means of these animals and of what the sea yields. Carlyle says, "Much would be lost if Iceland had not been burst up from the sea, not been discovered by the Northmen."

Edward Linden was listening to hear the first faint echo of that wonderful-voiced enchantress, when suddenly it burst upon his ear in closer, sweeter, louder and wilder pathetic strains. He was astonished, enraptured, subdued. He found himself advancing toward it again, but again it hushed.

What could it all mean? He was puzzled. Oh, he would follow that invisible enchantress forever if she would only let him hear her voice always.

At last he found himself standing by the margin of a large, beautiful bay—one of those grand, picturesque Northern Fiords. He leaned against a huge craggy boulder projecting over the water, and looked down into the charming waves that rolled upon the shore. A large, craggy bluff overlooked this fiord, and this boulder against which Edward leaned nearly cut off the view beyond it.

Near where he stood there was an eddy of still, deep water, into whose clear depths he gazed at his own image, thinking of the little romance he had had. All was quiet. Now and then some distant bleating of a sheep could be heard, and then the monotonous quack! quack! of the eider cluster sounded over the water. He was still thinking of that strange voice. Ah, how its melody vibrated in his heart that shining midnight

on the fiord! It was a ceaseless echo of a tender, sacred memory. He was surprised to find himself brushing away a few tears from his eyes.

Just then his enchantress aroused him with her song. It was a voice that sounded low and sweet over the resonant water. It chanted a melody sweet, but the language was unknown to the New Yorker. It was drawing nearer! He listened with rapture in his soul. He looked down into the clear, still water and saw his image smiling; and lo! there was another image, and it was smiling. But it had not noticed his.

He saw her stoop and heard the splash of the water as she dipped a pretty bouquet into it. He advanced a few steps past the projecting rock, where stood a maiden, half surprised, but not frightened, looking wonderingly at him. He lifted his hat and extended his courtesies to her. She bowed and smiled.

"Will you pardon me for this intrusion?" he asked confusedly. "Perhaps I have ventured too far and am intruding upon some one's premises."

She looked at him with mischief in her eyes, but did not answer. She stooped to pick up a blossom that had dropped from her bouquet. Edward spied a little boat just a few steps beyond her, drawn out on the graveled shore. Its oars were wet, giving evidence that they had been recently used.

While gazing at the boat and trying to find some way out of his embarrassment, he glanced once at the beautiful maiden, who was arranging the loose spray in her bouquet. Was she a perfect type of an Icelandic maiden? Could Ice-

land boast of such marvelous beauty? She lifted her eyes and looked full into his face. He smiled and her eyes fell, while the color touched her face with a charming blush. She fondled the delicate flowers nervously. Edward looked at her as one who felt conquerer. He knew the battle was his. For why those drooping eyes, those blushing cheeks? Did ever a king look into such tender, such innocent, such beautiful eyes? He beheld in them something tender, but could he tell what it was? The long silence became embarrassing, and Edward apologized:

"I am sorry to have imposed myself on you so abruptly. Please accept my sincere apologies."

She stood near the boat, lifted the oar from it, dipped the oar into the water and sprinkled the flowers with a kind of ritual baptism; then kissed them and laid them at his feet. Was ever greater homage paid to a king? He was puzzled to know what she meant. He knew not the interpretation of such a custom. She smiled as she looked at him with an idle tear in her eyes. He felt that she was waiting for some word or expression of gratitude and acceptance for an act of respect and recognition, and after a slight confusion he said:

"Of course I do not understand the significance of such an act; but, whatever it may be, I feel that it is a graceful recognition, and I shall always remember you gratefully for it."

"Stranger," she said timidly, "it means welcome."

"Then you will please pardon my rude manner of acceptance?"

"I am pleased to confer such happiness upon you," she replied.

Then she bowed demurely, gave her hand a kind of explanatory flourish, and said:

"Now that I have welcomed you, hick ah Loki, valla van dika! The Lord be thy keeper!"

Before he was aware of her movements, she stepped into her boat and had pushed it out from the bank into the water.

"Pray do not go yet!" he pleaded in awkward enthusiasm. "If I am not too presumptuous, may I ask your name?"

She shook her head and lifted her little jeweled hand gracefully to point across the fiord, where the dim distance showed the outline of what seemed to be an island, saying in a half-frightened tone: "Forbidden! Forbidden!"

"Oh, thou beautiful maiden of Iceland, tell me, oh, tell me! I—" She laughed merrily at his discomfiture, and quickly pushed her little shallop out from his reach. She said as she rowed swiftly away and glanced back: "Farewell!"

Edward looked at the departing object till it appeared like a mere speck in the distance, then it vanished in the distant haze. He saw something flash brilliantly in the sunlight where the boat had just disappeared, then it flickered and went out.

After a long walk, he reached the long slope of meadow where he had left his seismometers, and where he found his boat just as he had left it. He looked out over the fiord toward the yacht and saw a boat coming across toward him. He

took up his instruments and started down to meet the boat. It landed before he reached the shore, its occupants disembarked and came to meet him. He recognized Leland, but there was a stranger with him. But as they drew nearer he saw that it was Paix, who had a peculiar limp that would always identify him.

"*Mon Dieu!* Edward," he said laughing, with his hand extended, "it is an excellent piece of luck that I find you gentlemen here. I thought that you were going to Spitzbergen."

"Why, halloo, Paix. What strange whim brought you here?"

"Well, Edward, I can't give any reason other than that I was seeking mysteries and have found even more by coming here."

"Why, what have you found more than you sought?" interrupted Edward. Paix chuckled heartily as he answered:

"Well, I found two American fools and a land whose shores are lined with eider-down."

Leland laughed heartily, while Edward only smiled.

"Well, Paix," answered Edward, "you have been blessed with excellent success then to have found your old congenial chums again, eh?"

"Certainly, misery loves company, you know. Why, mon cher, you look dreadfully exhausted! Your hunt has wearied you. We had started to hunt you."

"Yes, Edward, you have been absent too long. Where have you been?" inquired Leland.

"Oh, I have just been hunting, taking sketches,

making observations, and so forth; don't be vexed."

"Well, let's be off to the yacht," suggested Leland.

"Yes," ejaculated Paix, "you must take a refreshment of *eau de vie* and revive yourself, Edward. I believe you have been up to some of your whims, you know."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LELAND and Edward rose from the supper table, went upon deck and seated thmselves. After some time, Leland looked up from the paper he was reading and said:

"Edward, I think it would be a wise conclusion on our part if we were to leave this dreary island and seek a more populous clime. There is nothing here but landscapes, eider-down, eider-ducks, codfish, fleece-backs, and perpetual day!"

Edward looked lazily at him with an amused smile.

"Don't get impatient, old boy. Here you should acquaint yourself with these picturesque scenes and store up in your knowledge-box valuable information concerning Arctic regions and Arctic customs. Here you should content yourself with study and preparation on your next series of lectures which you are going to deliver in America next season."

"As for Arctic scenery, I have seen enough already; and as to Arctic customs I know nothing, and from all appearances I have never seen the least indication of any inhabitants here."

"You have never met any of the natives, then?"

"No, I have never seen one."

"I don't suppose, then, that you could inform me about what I intended to inquire of you. Did

you know that there was a royal palace not far from here? It is a palace, I am sure, for I have seen its beautiful princess."

"Edward, there is some delusion raging in your brain. Any one knows that there is no palace here in this wilderness part of Iceland, where its few stupid inhabitants are so indolent that no enterprise can be propagated. Think of a palace in the midst of a people who can barely subsist on their meagre receipts from the production of eider-down, codfish and 'lamb's fleece'!"

"You may ridicule the idea if you want to, but I have told you the truth. And many other things I could tell you if you would listen and believe me."

"With pleasure, sir," said Leland, trying to become somewhat serious and earnest. Then Edward told him the whole story of his adventure. The story was full of interest to Leland.

"Well, upon my soul, Edward, you are not going to yield to sentimentalism and passion in this strange, legendary land, are you?"

"You are unjust in your implication, Leland. I was only saying that the lady whom I met was pretty."

"Perhaps you have really found the goddess of beauty. But mind that you don't find yourself worshipping at the shrine. I dare say she is a rustic maiden of Iceland, dressed in the affectation and unadorned beauty of Paganism, darting about through the masculine realms with a hope of catching for a husband some unsuspecting nobleman or American gentleman."

"Nonsense, Leland, I am not so easily captured,

you know. But I'll see if you are hard to capture. I want you to go with me this very night. You say you like romance and adventure; I shall give you a taste of it to-night. Will you go?"

"Perhaps I will," was the careless answer. "But let's go below and refresh ourselves by hearing Paix tell some of his marvelous exploits and air some of his jokes. You know his yacht just came in the other day while you were absent. He will be off for the Shetland Islands in a few days. So let us enjoy this soul-reviving wit and humor while we have him with us."

This they did, and an hour later their boat could be seen skipping over the deep water toward the mysterious little island. The sunlit veil of crimson and gold was spread across the skies and its beauty touched the bosom of the deep, making it smile as in a happy dream. Each stranded sunbeam spanned the universe from the ocean to the skies as if waiting for the touch of some gifted Orpheus to sound them into the grand orchestral anthems of heaven's grandest harmonies. To the moonlit scenery one often sees about the old Alhambra there was a mockery in the beauty of the golden tints that gleamed in the crimson hue of the Arctic skies and their glitter among the waves. The great mountains lifted their snow-crowned altars high among the clouds. Their massive, rocky steeps went up like towering pyramids whose dismantled ruins tell the mournful traditions of ages once bright, but now fled forever as flee the delusions of a happy dream.

Edward and Leland were silent for some time.

Their boat cleaved the gilded waves and only the continual splashing of their oars in the water broke the silence—the solemn stillness.

At last they reached a landing-place, where they looked at the strange surroundings with a feeling of awe.

There was a wharf on the shore and near by was a large, old-fashioned yacht anchored at its place of mooring. The island was beautiful in its verdant robe of Arctic evergreens and its picturesque rocks and cliffs all trailing with creeping vines.

Edward looked uneasily about him. He moved about cautiously, and when he spoke, it was in awe and muffled accents. He at length found a little path that wound through the pines and rocks; and he suggested that they follow it. Leland agreed and Edward led the way. They wound around great rocks and boulders and through the dense pine forest, till at length they came suddenly upon a great stone wall. The path led directly to a huge stone door in the massive wall. The adventurers looked at each other as if puzzled. The door was almost hidden under a copious entanglement of evergreen vines, and Edward cautiously drew them aside and looked in. The door was open. They could see a long, neatly trimmed arbor that led up to the doorstep of what, from their situation, seemed to be a house.

Then lightly and cautiously they stepped in through the open doorway. Once within, they stopped and looked around with admiration at the magnificent prospect.

In the center of a beautiful square yard stood the most magnificent home that the wandering

adventurers had ever seen. The midnight sun gilded its fretted and friezed eaves and corners with tints of gold and wove a wreath of sunlight about the beautiful building. Here and there beautiful evergreen shrubs and tall pines dotted the yard. Vases and pots swinging beautified the scene with lovely rare flowers whose loveliness enhanced the Northern barrenness and whose creeping tendrils swung like green trees in the breezes or spread their rich growth like a royal mantle over the ground.

A long, low, narrow arbor led the way from the gate to the house. On its sides were thick growths of shrubbery neatly trimmed. They walked along under this arbor until they came very near the house, and there they lay down to rest and look about the beautiful palace. They were almost hidden in the clustering vines where they reclined on a carpet of softest verdure. Their conversation was in a low, muffled tone. Perfect stillness brooded all around. Not a leaf nor a spray moved.

Leland had just remarked about the strange stillness, when suddenly a great flash flamed across the universe like a myriad host of blazing demons. From East to West the fiery darts quivered with petulant anger; then rolled into massive heaps and surged out into the gaping universe again. Then a quaking tremor ran over the land like a trembling wave, and a terrible, deafening roar startled the midnight stillness. The mountains were awake with the grand echoes as they bounded angrily through the craggy cliffs and deep resonant valleys. It was a time fraught

with terror. All Iceland quaked under the power of Mt. Hekla, whose destructive contents boiled to fury in the burning regions of her fiery bed. There had been a slight eruption beneath, but its power reached this part of Iceland only to produce a violent tremor. The cinders drifted over the land and in the air like falling flakes of soiled snow.

Edward looked at his friend in consternation. There was an anxious, fearful look on his face. Leland was cool and composed. The distant rumbling of the receding echoes could be faintly heard.

Leland was about to speak when a voice murmuring something indistinctly but angrily fell on their ears. They looked up and saw a figure pass hurriedly by them. They looked after it and saw it pause at the open door and look cautiously out, then look back. It was a man. He placed his spy-glass to his eye, viewed the land over, then observed the midnight sky. As he took his glasses from his eyes, he shook his head with an air of suspecting ill. He drew back, closed the door and walked back down the arbor with his head thrown back as if to make some new astronomical discovery. However, he stopped just opposite where they were reclining, drew his gold-hilted sword from its sheath, flourished it and exclaimed:

"O ye sons of Muspelheim! I wist not what it was, but I apprehend that thy wrath and thy curse hath rent the heavens. From whence cometh this angry flash, this deafening roar, that awful quaking? Out of the bowels of Muspelheim

make ye the emblem of thine wrath to burst forth. Hadiwist thine omnipotence, O Alfadur! O Alfadur!"

He bowed over his sword, restored it to its sheath, and disappeared among the vines at the end of the arbor.

"What strange language," remonstrated Edward. "He addressed his words of devotion to one Alfadur. Doubtless he is a pagan."

"He seems to have customs and proclivities like a Norseman," put in Leland. "The Greeks had their thirty thousand gods; the Gomerians defied their ancient kings; the Chaldeans and Romans violated their most natural affections by murdering their children and their prisoners; and the Danes of Iceland—are they not worshippers of strange gods?"

They were silent for some time, during which slight oscillations of the ground could be felt. A strange stillness oppressed the surroundings, and a deep, fearful sensation crept over the hushed intruders. But at last Leland spoke:

"Edward, we are prisoners. We can never escape from this prison now. Did you see the old man fasten the huge stone door?"

"Yes, but surely we can escape. He will be generous and turn us out."

"But the uncertainty of it will be such a dreadful suspense. I warned you not to make this adventure. You know that I persisted that we should not trespass; but nothing would do you but come in. And now if you were to be devoured by all the gods of the infernal pagan land, or captured by all the deities of heathendom and placed

on an icy throne upon the summit of Iceland's tallest yokul, where you would be compelled to reign in your royal but cool majesty, while the whole Danish populace fell down and worshipped you in your royal highness and coolness, it would be nothing more than you deserve."

Edward laughed good-humoredly.

"Remember, old boy, that we are subject alike to the powers that be; let us make the best of it."

Just then they were startled by the howl of a large, fierce dog snarling fiercely right against their faces, while a large, tall man, with gray beard and haughtily poised head, stood by with a chain in his hand with which he restrained the bloodthirsty canine. The old man gazed viciously at them a moment, then his voice was like a fierce howl as he spoke:

"Ye infernal spies! Ye villains! What brought you here? Speak at once and speak the truth—speak! Speak!"

"We are lost, friend," stammered Edward cowardly.

"Hush! Hush! How dare you intrude upon my private premises? How callest thou me friend when you have wilfully and stealthily crept in here! Ye are spies!"

"You will permit us to be your friend then?"

"*No!*" he thundered. "Not by all the power of Alfadur and all his kingdoms! The anger and vengeance of Surtur is aroused. I knew that their anger was raging, for sawest not the flaming universe and didst thou feel the violent tremor of the earth? And because you have trespassed upon and polluted my sacred premises, I

shall suffer the vengeance of the gods! I shall drive you from my sight, ye cursed devils!"

Leland rose and confronted the old gentleman with perfect calmness and respect.

"You are a reasonable man, I believe, sir; and I trust you will not judge us too harshly. We meant no harm whatever by being here. We are gentlemen and shall prove it if given half a chance—just kindly go with us to open the door, and we will bid you a final and affectionate farewell."

He looked at the old man and smiled amusedly. The old Dane had become perfectly calm, and he held out his hand and cordially grasped Leland's.

"I see, I see!" he said warmly. "Ye are both gentlemen. But that chap there" (indicating Edward) "is so officiously intrusive,—so anxious to interpose into the affairs of others! You begged to remain outside, but his meddlesome nature lured you in with him. My vengeance shall not be against you. The inscription on the wall is meant only for those who are outlaws and who may sometimes, in their strolls over the country, find my happy, beautiful, hidden home. You, gentlemen, are the first to discover it. For many years I have lived here a recluse. Come with me and see where I have loved to live so long. You are distinguished gentlemen, I know, and I shall feel honored to have you in my home."

"Many thanks, kind sir. We beg to return to our yacht across the bay."

The old man seemed to be getting angry and irritated, and some peculiar intuition told them

that to refuse his request would be as dangerous as irritating an old lion.

"But if you really desire to have us in your home, we will abide with you a while," put in Leland quickly.

"Now that's generous. Come on, lads, follow me."

They followed. Edward's heart beat wildly as he thought hopefully that he would perhaps get to see the beautiful maiden who had so completely won his heart. The old man led them through the arbor to the beautiful mansion and up a series of granite steps.

He opened the door of his fine mansion, and led them through the corridor, all draped in the richest crimson silk hangings, contrasted here and there with cream-colored appendages and snow-white satin draperies. On either side of them were beautiful sofas and plush-cushioned chairs and neat little artistic tables upon which numbers of photographs and fancy pictures were neatly arranged. Their feet sank noiselessly into the thick carpet. Above them great and beautiful chandeliers hung suspended by golden rods and chains.

But the old Dane paused not here. Leading them on, he started up a flight of stairs that ascended gracefully up through the magnificent building. Every wall, every railing, every column, every window was embellished with all the adorning beauty that the tasteful perception of the mind can conceive. No human eyes were ever more perfectly gratified by the refined beauty of a grander mansion or more excellent furnish-

ings. But a strange stillness pervaded the rooms. They followed him till they stood with him in a room magnificent to behold. It was adorned with all the adorning excellency that wealth can offer. In one corner a shroud of violet draperies hung in rich folds by silver rings suspended from the ceiling, and concealing that portion of the room from view. He conducted them cautiously across the room, parted the folds of this drapery and whispered half aloud, "Fjonkon! Fjonkon!"

The answer came sweet and low, "What is it, father?"

"Ah, you awake, child?"

"You waked me. I was dreaming."

"Are you well, daughter?"

"Yes, father, I am well. Did you want me?"

"No, no, child, take thy rest. Good-night."

"Good-night, father."

He turned away, and the curtains swung back together again. But Leland's eyes failed not to catch a glimpse of the beautiful sleeper as she lay upon the little sofa. While he looked he had noticed the pale blue garment she wore. She had evidently lain down to rest without removing her day garments.

The old Dane turned to his friends and beckoned to them to follow him. Not a footstep could be heard on the soft carpet as they left the room. When they were out of the sumptuous chamber, the old pagan stopped and whispered:

"I meant to show you my beautiful daughter if she were asleep, but she was too much awake to-night. Here, lads, shall be your resting-place. Be seated. I must repair to my private apartment

for a while. Then I will return and we will have some wine." He bowed and left them.

They looked about upon the splendid structure and sumptuous furnishings of the room which they occupied, and wondered how such a magnificent palace ever found its abode in so dreary a land as Iceland. Leland turned to his friend and remarked sarcastically:

"Now what have you accomplished? You brought me here to see a young, captivating Danish maiden, but I have failed to see her. I am thinking that we will have to return to the "Lorelei' with a tale of a wonderful romance—a femininelessadventure!"

He laughed heartily, but in a muffled tone. Edward could only grin and sigh as if disappointed. He stretched himself full length upon the sofa and was soon asleep. Leland's curiosity had been aroused to a degree beyond his usual temperament, and he could not think of sleeping. An intense longing rankled in his bosom to see the face of that gracefully reclining woman he had seen on the little sofa in the shrouded chamber. He was touched with the voice. There was something familiar in the rhythmical tone of it. "I was too severe with my irony on Edward when I endeavored to ridivule his enthusiasm to see a Danish maiden," thought Leland; "here am I, almost frantically wild to get only one little glimpse of another one. It is absurd in me, but I cannot help it."

These thoughts flew through his mind while his chum slumbered. For several minutes he sat with his face buried in his hands in deep medi-

tation. Then he suddenly arose and smiled as he murmured inaudibly, "I will see her!" Then stealing his way to the narrow passage leading to the strange chamber, he entered it and stopped for a moment to listen.

All was silent as the rock-cut tombs of antiquity, and he went on quietly to the shrouded corner. He paused. What should he do? He was almost afraid to venture. But he must.

Carefully parting the delicate silken folds, he looked in. He drew back, confused and astonished. His daughter, indeed! How could it be? Here lay she, the beautiful Hessione rescued from the jaws of the sea-monster by some strong Hercules. He looked at her beautiful face, calm in sweet ropose. Her soft lashes touched the fair cheeks, half revealing a mischievous smile; and the corners of her finely-chiseled lips twitched charmingly as if a pleasant dream were tickling her young heart. Her beautiful hand lay listlessly at her side, while with the other she held the rich, beautiful brown tresses that lay loosely over her shoulders. The lace at her wrist-band had fallen back, revealing her beautiful dimpled arms with their load of precious jewels.

"Here lies the beautiful priestess of Aphrodite," he thought to himself, "and I, the captivated Leander of Abydos, have received the painless but incurable wound from Cupid's love-shaft and have fortunately swum over a wide Hellespont to see her."

He gazed at her with such rapture in his heart that he felt that his eyes, his soul, could drink in the beauty of her face forever. She seemed to be

sleeping in perfect peace. While he lavished his gaze of admiration upon her, she chanced to open her eyes and look at him, and he happened to be smiling. She looked vacantly at him. Her calm features and clear, brown eyes betokened something of a strange bewilderment. Then Leland called tenderly:

"Mamie! My darling Mamie!"

She smiled pensively as she rose from her sofa and came toward him.

"Ah, Leland! How strange that you are here! Oh, Mr. Burnett, can it really be you!"

He took her little hand in his, pressed it spasmodically between his fingers, then lifted it tenderly to his lips. How he longed to take her in his arms as he had once done in the silent sanctuary of the magnificent Temple.

"Yes, Mamie; but it is still stranger that I find you so far away from your home and residing in the home of an Iceland-dweller."

She only smiled, while a few stray tears stole down her beautiful cheeks. Then she looked up into his face with a strange perplexity and confusion in her eyes.

"What brought you to this strange land?" she inquired.

He told her in a few words of his pleasure trip in the North seas, of his accompanying friend, Mr. Linden, and of his beautiful new yacht, the "Lorelei." For several moments he stood by her, talking tenderly of the days gone by, rehearsing many tender, sacred memories still sad, yet which had a comforting virtue about them.

To her he seemed a noble king. She felt as

though environed in the midst of a halo of paradisical bliss. His voice was a sound of sweetest music; his face the personification of consummate beauty.

In the midst of their felicity, Leland almost forgot how the time was fleeing. He looked at his watch and exclaimed: "I declare, I must return to Edward! What a wonderful discovery I have made! Darling Mamie, I praise God that He has helped me to find you at last. O, you precious sweet child, how could I ever have lived without you."

His lips touched her hand, and he added: "May I come back to see you again?"

"I trust that you will visit us now and then before you go back to America," she whispered softly as she looked up into his face with fond eyes swimming in tears of love.

"I shall be pleased to do so," he said as he bowed over her little hand and kissed it.

Something in her eyes like a tender, appealing supplication caused him to linger near her, then he turned to go. He left her standing like a beautiful, happy angel amid the glory of her richly embellished chamber, and was soon standing over his friend Edward and tickling his face with the fringed ends of a tassel that hung over the sofa. Edward awoke and sat up, rubbing his eyes.

Just then the old Dane entered the room and announced that he was ready to receive them in his parlor. They were conducted to the lower floor and into a grand drawing-room. In all the great house there was no room so sumptuously fur-

nished as this one. Offering them chairs, he rang a bell, and soon a little Frenchwoman appeared.

"Bring some wine, Gerda, and the glasses and waiter to serve it on. Also fetch the 'Danish Favorite.'"

The maiden gazed with astonishment at the visitors. Their presence was a wonder. How did they ever find their way to this mysterious house? But she did not tarry, but alertly obeyed orders. In a short time she re-entered the drawing-room, came to the little table, lowered the salver, arranged the sparkling wines and liquors mechanically, and stepped back to await the further summons of the master.

"If Thalia has returned, tell her that Amphion Maldemar hath requested her to come into the drawing-room."

After a few moments there was a rustling at the door, and the child Thalia entered the room. Her beautiful hair was crowned with jewels; her partially bare arms adorned with sparkling golden bracelets; her elegant figure attired in richest sky-blue satin; her little feet encased in snow-white, golden-buckled slippers appearing daintily beneath the pretty ruffles of her skirt. She glanced at the gentlemen, then turned to the old Dane and said sweetly, in a low tone:

"Here I am, good Amphion."

While the old man drew the beautiful child down to him and whispered something to her and kissed her fair cheeks, Edward whispered to Leland:

"There, there! Do you call that a 'rustic maiden of Iceland'? That is the same maiden

whom I met across the Fjoheim. See! how beautiful!"

Until now Leland had not seen her face, but there was something sweet and familiar in her voice.

The old man arose, took the beautiful girl by the arm, led her up before the gentlemen, and in his peculiar ancient custom introduced her first to Edward. He rose and bowed, and she addressed him with a pleasant smile of recognition. But her lovely eyes fell as she noticed the wonderful smile on his face.

Turning to Leland, who had risen, the polite old Dane extended the formal introduction to him. But the maiden drew back and gazed blankly at Leland with a strange bewilderment. Leland was confused, yet he fully recognized the face before him. He smiled and said in that tenderest tone which always sounded the deepest, purest passion of his soul:

"Lilian, is it possible that you do not recognize me?"

"O Leland! My precious brother!"

She flew to him and threw her dimpled arms about his neck and kissed him repeatedly, uttering words of delight and rejoicing. For a brief interval they stood clasped in each other's arms, saying not a word, Lilian too much overjoyed for words, and Leland weeping too much even to try to speak.

It was indeed Lilian Dillion, the lost child of the lonely broken-hearted mother. Leland held her in his arms as he resumed his seat, and she

clung to him, hiding her bright face against his heart.

As great and incomparable as the joys of heaven and its beautiful angels are, is it any wonder to think that there is no joy and gladness sweeter than the blissfulness in the hearts of a lost brother and sister who at last meet again and clasp each other to their hearts? God was giving to Leland and Lilian Dillion that ineffable joy which only the lost who are found can know. Oh, what a tender pathetic scene to see two children who had been lost from each other so long again clasped in each other's embrace! A sister's love is so pure; a brother's love is so passionate and strong!

The old Dane was perplexed. Taking a seat by Edward, he inquired of him what such strange proceeding meant. But Edward was equally curious to know. To relieve the ensuing embarrassment, the old Dane offered him another glass of wine and began to talk. Meanwhile Leland tenderly lifted the tear-stained face to his lips and fondly kissed it.

"Lilian, I never dreamed of finding you here. I have spent great sums of money and searched the world over for you, and had almost given up in despair. But I never would have thought of finding you here. Tell me all, how you came here."

She smiled and pointed cautiously toward the old Dane.

"Not now, Leland," she whispered. Then she seated herself close to him, looked tenderly up into his face and said: "You sought me for

mother's sake, did you not?"

"Yes, and because——"

"Because you loved me, too; yes, I know!" She laughed softly.

"I was afraid you were in distress."

"No, no, never for one moment since I have come into this beautiful, quiet home. Of course, I have longed to see mother."

"But you were stolen from home and carried away?"

"Oh, yes, I will tell you all. The abductor found me reading and seized me. I tried to scream, but he placed his big, rough hand over my mouth and smothered my voice. I was carried away, I know not how or where, and was kept blindfolded until I found myself looking through the iron bars of some great castle-prison which stood looking over the precipice of a tall, dreary cliff into the sea. There I was starving with hunger, without a friend, without a home, without a mother's care! At last the good Amphion yonder chanced to see me one day looking through the bars with tears in my eyes. He became sorry for me, and shouted from the deck of his ship, asking why I was in prison. I could not tell him. He ventured to investigate the matter, whereupon he learned from the dreary, disguised owner of the castle that I was a prisoner of his, which he was keeping in custody as a kidnapped charge, and for whose release he demanded a great ransom—a million dollars. Good Amphion paid them and gave me my freedom, and brought me here to his beautiful home."

There was a brief silence, which Edward broke, saying:

"It seems that there are few, if any, inhabitants in this part of Iceland other than you, Mr. Maldemar?"

"There is not another dweller nearer than the village, which is about seven miles away," answered the Dane.

"This is about the prettiest part of Iceland, is it not?"

"This is at least one of the prettiest localities. Besides that, it is such a desirable place for eider-duck raising, and these verdant slopes and valleys furnish abundant pastures for my sheep and cattle. And I derive a handsome profit from my codfish export."

"It seems that it has been an easy matter for you to get rich here," put in Leland. The old man laughed good-humoredly.

"Of course, I have had it all to myself, and if I am a millionaire, I cannot boast, for I have simply taken care of what my substance has yielded me, which has been by no means a difficult task."

"You have needed no neighbors then."

"I have seen the time when I would have appreciated a good neighbor very much, but they are so treacherous here in Iceland that I can't trust any one. They all hate me and fear me because I am what they call a pagan. Some of them call me a god, some call me a wizard, and some call me a devil calculated to instigate mischief among the gods."

"Yet you would not exchange your beautiful

home for all the kingdoms in the great Southland."

"No, indeed I would not!"

"Iceland is such a beautiful land along the coast," said Edward.

"Iceland is a wonder-island to all the world. Englishmen are frequently met here in the southern waters of Iceland, and they often penetrate to the great dreary lava and sand plateau on the interior. They all become perfectly charmed with the beautiful wild scenery. You, gentlemen, are the first Americans I have ever met in the Northland. If you will come back to-morrow, I will take you around to the many places of interest and show you something worth seeing. The scenes are so rare and beautiful that the memory of them causes a feeling of deep regret when one has left them, and one thinks of them again years afterward. Indeed it is hard to turn away from them at all."

"Thank you, Mr. Maldemar. We shall be sure to take advantage of your hospitality," answered Edward heartily.

"Yes," put in Leland eagerly, "you may look for us."

"Is your yacht at anchor on the Oerajalf?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then we will join you there to-morrow—Thalia and my child and myself. It will be better to sail in your yacht, as my vessel is needing repairs."

"Very well, we gladly welcome you," granted Leland.

They rose to go, and after they had refused

courteously several requests to stay longer, the old man arose to conduct them to the stone gate. Leland kissed his sister tenderly. She looked up sweetly and whispered:

"You must come back often. There is some one here that you would give your life to see."

"Ah, sister, you are cunning. You set a trap and bait it with something to decoy me back."

"No, brother, I am serious. My dear governess——"

"Hush! Hush! I know she is here."

Just then Edward came up to bid Lilian goodby, and Leland joined the old Dane, who was just then stepping into the corridor. Edward lingered with Lilian, who walked slowly with him to the veranda.

As Leland and the old Dane walked slowly down the arbor, the former asked: "Sir, did you know that the child whom you call Thalia is my sister?"

"Yes, I know now that she is your sister," he replied somewhat in a tone of regret. "Thalia told me that when she whispered to me in the drawing-room. She has often told me of you. I promised to take her back to America when I take my next and last voyage to the new foreign country next year. Next to my own child, she is the sweetest child in the world. The gods have endowed her with an immaculate soul and her exit from this life will be a peaceful transit to a glorious land of everlasting happiness."

Meanwhile Edward and Lilian stood near each other on the doorstep, where the tendrils and roses circled symmetrical over their heads. The

sun was swimming in a crimson sea. It was morning. Edward stooped and whispered very tenderly: "The memory of your beautiful face will be forever the sweetest memory of my life. Ah, Miss Dillion, I shall never forget our sweet little romance on the Fjorheim!"

He took her little hand in his and pressed it cordially. She had been looking into his face as he spoke till he mentioned the romance, when her eyes fell, a charming rosy color touched her cheeks, and a pleasing smile faintly played on her lips.

She watched him till they were lost among the vines that clustered around the doorway. Tiny tears were stealing over her cheeks. She asked herself why. She threw her noble head back, a merry laugh rippling from her lips as she turned into the house. Involuntarily her hand sought her heart, for there was a peculiar sensation there she had never felt before.

When the old Dane had conducted the gentlemen through the door he shook hands with them, saying:

"May the peace of the gods attend you, is my richest benediction. Hick ah valla van dika! I was gruff toward you when I first met you, but I then had a presentiment that your intrusion had offended the gods, and that because of that offense the writhing Loki shook the earth. The great sons of Muspelheim ride the flaming universe and over the Bifrist bridge at such a time with the terrible flames of anger about them. Some day Surtur, one of the sons and leader of Muspelheim, will dart fire over the world and the

whole universe be burned up. The sun will become dim; the earth will sink into the ocean; the stars will fall from heaven; time will be no more. But we now part in peace. We are friends; go in peace."

They parted, and the old Dane returned to his mansion.

When Edward and Leland were once more upon the fiord, Leland laughed heartily.

"Well, upon my soul, Edward, this wild escapade seems more romantic than the exciting, frightful traditions of ancient mythology."

"Oh, yes, old boy, you are greatly indebted to me for this bit of romance. At first you ridiculed the idea; now you are wild over it. You are as fickle and changeable as these starless northern skies."

"Indeed, I am greatly indebted to you, Edward, for through your instrumentality I have found my lost sister. That child Thalia, with whom you were conversing on the doorstep, is my sister."

"Yes, she told me about it, and that beautifies a romance."

"Yes, and may God be praised! And along with this I have made another discovery equally as pleasant to me."

"Pray tell me!"

Their skiff drifted slowly as Leland told how he had found Mamie Homean while she slept in peace in her shrouded chamber.

At length they reach the "Lorelei." A glowing orange sky curved perfectly over the ocean, which slowly became painted in purple and gold, pow-

dered here and there with opalescent tints. As the rising waves swelled over the ocean's bosom, a stubborn breeze touched the spray with the magic touch that caused it to glow like a silver plume. The low murmur sounded musically over the water, then swelled to a monotonous tone that seemed to come over the silver-crested waves like the cries of a moaning wanderer lost in some unknown isle of a lonely sea.

Leland paused to look at the spectrum of heavenly glory. Its color quivered for a moment, then a changing hue overmasked the splendor and a perfect golden light shone from the entire universe. The mountains swam in the golden flood like a visionary scene of Elysian fields, all wrapped in the vapory gauze of the sea maze. The peaceful mantle of tranquillity brooded over the paradisical scene, and the charming effect upon the sense of appreciation was beyond the power of human language to express.

Leland smiled as if gratified with the enchanting beauty, then turned and joined Edward, wh was chattering away with Paix in the music saloon.

The night had been spent in absolute wakefulness, therefore Leland retired to his cabin to sleep. Edward accepted a challenge from the expert billiardist, Paix, and for some time the clash of their balls and the ring of their laughter sounded over the Oerajalf.

Then all was quiet.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Leland Burnett Dillion's yacht was a most magnificent structure, and it looked grand as it floated at anchor on the Oerajalf. Leland went to the expense of one million dollars to fit her up for his purpose. It was a sea-vessel of costly construction. But few vessels more lavishly elaborate than the "Lorelei" and her fitting and decorations could enter the conception of the human mind. Exquisite paintings by some of the most celebrated artists adorned the saloons and cabins. All the woodwork was elaborately carved. There was a fine library, a billiard room and a music-saloon aboard, also a beautiful white marble fountain, while some of the ornaments were of the rarest.

Three magnificent suites of rooms or apartments were on board, devoted to the use of Leland, his friend, Edward, and whoever might be the occasional guest.

The dining-room was paneled with tulip-wood. The door-handles, finger-plates and lamp-fittings were of heavily carved silver.

The magnificent yacht contained also a fine marble bath-room, with heavy silver fittings, and the walls and doors of the principal cabin were heavily inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl.

Therefore, having a very beautiful interior, splendid accommodation for both crew and passengers, if any passengers desired to be on board, and of magnificent proportions, and also considering her beauty and purpose, she might be termed the most convenient and most sumptuous yacht afloat.

It was in one of the magnificent saloons that the voyagers were assembled the next day after the romance on the little island, engaged in conversation. They had discussed the phenomenon of the volcanic frequency and the continual tremor of the earth. Their pilot said that the shock that had occurred the day previous was the most violent shock that the island had felt for many years. Finding that Rheubin, the pilot, was somewhat acquainted with the surroundings, Leland proceeded to question him.

"Uncle Rheubin, do you know a gentleman living near this place by the name of Amphion Maldêmar?"

The old pilot fondled his beard dubiously, and looked grave.

"If I be not mistaken, there is no one whose abode is within the vicinity of these parts of Iceland. But I remember having met an old sailor in southern seas by that name."

"What is the name of his ship?"

"He was proud to call her his fleeting *Skidbladnir,* I remember well," laughed Rheubin.

Leland glanced at Edward with an air of satisfaction, for this statement corroborated the fact that they had seen the old man's favorite *Skidbladnir* floating at anchor near the little island.

"He is a sailor, then," remarked Edward.

"Many years ago he was. I have not seen him these many years. He always took his beautiful wife with him wherever he went, but she died. Then he had one beautiful little girl left, but one day she suddenly disappeared from him, leaving him bereft of all that was dear to him."

"Are there any noted caverns about here?" asked Edward carelessly. Rheubin looked at him with a keen, quick, suspicious glance; and after hesitating a moment, said briefly, "No, sir." There was a long pause, then Edward asked:

"What means 'Naomi'?"

"Naomi? Why, it has no special significance, I think," but there was an uneasiness in his manner. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I just asked because I thought of the name."

"You have seen Naomi?"

"No, not that I know of, but I have seen the name."

Rheubin looked at him curiously.

"You have been in the doomed Elvidnir, then?" he asked.

"The doomed what?"

"Elvidnir is an ancient cavern only a short way from here. It is a haunted cave, gloomy, deep and dark! You are made of the stuff that grows knights and heroes if you have dared to venture into its dismal haunts."

Edward's answer was neither affirmative nor negative. He simply laughed lazily.

It was clear to Leland that Rheubin was ignorant of Amphion's native land and of whether he was yet living.

The conversation turned into the usual channels.

Amphion Maldemar was a true, stalwart pagan. His proclivities were such that contemplated many gods and heroes. He was firm and rigid in his convictions, yet lenient with those who differed from him. He was quick, impetuous, easily angered, fierce in his insatiable mad passions; yet he had a mild, tender temperament when not angry that completely won every heart to him. He hated everything that was untrue, and utterly abhorred everything not pure. Once he was a sailor in the southern seas, but now he went to souhtern waters about once in five years. Some peculiar circumstances occurring many years before had wrought a great change in him. Since that time he had been a recluse, withdrawing himself from the world and all mankind. He was a descendant of the ancient Danish royal family—Amphion was by birth a *King!*

Amphion firmly believed that a time would come when all the visible creation, the gods of Valhalla and Niffleheim, the inhabitants of Alfheim and Midgard, together with their habitations, would be destroyed. But before all this there would be a triple winter, during which great, prodigious quantities of snow would fall from the four corners of the heavens, the frost would be very severe, the wind piercing, the weather dreary and stormy and a gloom of darkness wrap the world in dismal oblivion. Three of these tempestuous winter seasons would rage over the chaotic, storm-beaten world without the intervention of a single milder season. After that

there would be three other winters in succession, during which war and contention would pervade over the earth and through the universe. He believed that Loki would howl with horror and twist his body with great violence till the whole earth would tremble, the sea leave its bed, the heavens be rent asunder, and men perish in great numbers. Great turmoil and strife would exist among the gods and heroes, and all the world would rush together, and there would then ensue a terrible slaughter and massacre such as has never yet been known. The great heroes of Muspelheim, the Norseman's awful and horrible fire-world—the volcano's fiery bed, which has been for the many, many ages past the dread and superstition and fear and horror of the strange Norsemen—would hurry across the universe, led by Surtur, before and behind whom were flames and burning fire. Heimdall would sound the great Gialler horn that great day, and every god and hero would rush to the battle-field called Vigrid, where they would meet in contest with the great Frost Giants. The contest would terminate in the final destruction of all who engaged in the battle. Then Surtur, seeing that all the gods have fallen and all the heroes slain, would hurl fire and seething, sweeping flames over the world, and the whole universe be burned up, "the sun become dim, the earth sink into the ocean, the stars fall from heaven—and time would be no more."

His conception of this mysterious existence did not stop at that. There was yet another existence more beautiful in its virtue, and which called for something like an Eternity. He believed that

after this end of time would come a more delightful existence. A new heaven and a new earth would arise out of the sea, and this would be peopled with an immaculate race. He knew not what to call this new existence, but was content to believe that it would be, and that Alfadur, a grander and more supreme deity, would reign supremely as its omnipotent creator! It would be a world of consummate beauty, abundant supplies, supreme felicity; wickedness and misery would be no more known, but the gods and men and heroes would live happily together forever.

Amphion Maldemar had lived many years, and the older he grew the more firmly he became fixed in his strange religious proclivities. The mountains might be tumbled into the seas, the great world drop into darkest oblivion; but he would remain unmoved, undaunted, fearless, honest in his convictions; and whatever might be the result of all this great mysterious machinery's working power that so mysteriously moves the universe, he was Amphion Maldemar, the *King,* the true pagan Norseman!—the same to-day, to-morrow and forever.

Leland had gone upon deck, and was watching the novel scenes that continually played upon the sky. There was no conception of beauty that could half-way rival its beauty and glory. As he looked out over the breeze-blown ocean, he saw a boat slowly approaching the vessel from the direction of the little island. It seemed long in coming, but at length drew up near the vessel, and a masculine voice hailed him from the boat.

"Welcome! Thrice welcome!" cried Leland

with joy, waving his cap at him as a salute. It was Amphion Maldemar, with the two princesses. In a short time they were on deck, receiving the hearty reception of Leland and his friends. They were conducted to Leland's finest saloon.

"By the gods!" exclaimed the Dane, "how art and architecture have advanced these latter years! Young Dillion, your yacht is indeed a grand one. No doubt you are proud of it."

"I am, indeed, very grateful to you for your praise. Yes, I am more than proud, I am thankful to own so valuable a vessel."

Presently Paix entered the saloon. He bowed demurely to the ladies with the cunning smile lurking in his eyes.

"Why, Mr. Paix!" exclaimed both ladies at once, rising to sha kehis hand. "All this is such a delightful surprise! I am so glad to see you."

"Thanks, thanks. I know you do deem it quite fortunate to strike such a valuable friend as I,—as though I had been one of mankind's most liberal benefactors." He laughed sarcastically.

"Why, Mr. Paix, you do yourself injustice by such ridicule," ejaculated Lilian.

Leland rose and presented Paix to the old Dane. The lively conversation was renewed.

After a while Edward suggested a perambulating upon the deck, to which all agreed. Then he arose and accompanied the Dane. Paix took Lilian upon his arm and followed. But Leland and Mamie remained in the room, engaged in inaudible conversation. He was saying:

"But I, who have always regarded you so tenderly, have an undeniable right to know why you

have chosen to live in the sequestered land, far from home, friends and loved ones. Oh, child, tell me why you elude me in every feasible way possible? Mamie, you may spend your life to conquer that never-dying love in your heart for me, but when you come to the last of your days, you will find that even to the very last struggle that love will be victorious, and will stand unmarred, undaunted, intrepid, and without a wound, over the conscience which it has slain, and claim its idol for which it shall have been so long in contest."

She had not been looking up at him while he was speaking, but when he had finished she looked up from the little silken tassel which she had been fondling, and there were tears in her lovely eyes and a pitiful tremor crossed her lips. She looked pleadingly for a moment. They were silent. The music of his wonderful, familiar voice brought back to her tender, sacred memories of the time when she had heard that voice echoing in the Temple back at dear old "Gethsemane," and it touched her heart with that same passionate yearning for him whose perverted life she had so bitterly disdained. She had thought that all affections for him were conquered, but now the flitting arrows of Cupid renewed the old painless wound, and her heart again began to drip with the blood of a never-healing, torturing love.

"It is exceedingly painful to rehearse all the tender, sacred reminiscences that are suggested to my memory at the sound of your voice and by your presence. But I sometimes think that these memories are helpful to us. So you will please

pardon these flowing tears?" She brushed them away, smiled pensively and continued: "Yes, you have a right to know why I am here. And, of course, there is associated with the fact a deep, inexpressible strangeness to those who do not know the simple circumstances. Indeed, who would ever have thought that I would have come to se remote, so friendless, so desolate a place as Iceland? Not even myself. Nevertheless, I came here through a mysterious providence.

"It was the beautiful night when you saw me standing by the river Tiber that forms the connecting link of my past life with the events of my life in this beautiful land. You, of course, remember that beautiful moonlight night, that night when you knelt by me and pleaded for my life. I was then in very feeble health and almost at the point of hopeless despair. It was there, when you refused to hear me and when you hurried abruptly away from me in seemingly bitterest disdain, that the last thread of hope snapped and despair seized me. When you had gone, I can remember nothing except seeing two boats drifting upon the river's eddy-water at their place of mooring; and that in my frenzied, distorted mind I got into one of them and determined to go back to America that I might at least die satisfied and in peace in my beautiful home on the Cumberland. Of course, I was foolish, but I was in a state of frenzy. I fancied I could see my beautiful mother looking down from heaven upon me. I was so happy and so free from pain. The beautiful ripples on the river turned to gold and seemed like millions of tiny golden shells cov-

ering the face of the deep water. There was music in my soul, and with an inspiration of rapture, I began to sing to mother. But just then a sudden darkness enshrouded me, and I fell insensible. They say I was unconscious for weeks —I don't know—I remember only that the first time I knew anything was one day, several weeks afterward, when I awoke perfectly conscious to find myself lying upon a beautiful couch with silk draperies hanging about me—I awoke where you found me yesterday.

"Leland, you have always wanted to know of what type or race I was. My mother was a purely American woman, though she sleeps in a dreary tomb away here in Iceland. My father is of Danish descent, and is no other than the old man whom you call Amphion Maldemar. It was a kind act of Providence that my father chanced to be sailing in southern seas and found my little wave-tossed bark drifting over the billows with me in it. He took me in, and said I was so like my mother that he was almost sure that I was his lost child; and to satisfy himself, he looked for the little diamond bead necklace that my mother gave me to wear. When he found it, he knew that I was his child, for there is a little locket with it here—I will show you," and she took it from her neck and held it so he could see. "See, it has her name, *Naomi,* on it. Beyond a doubt I was his lost child. He brought me to Iceland and took me into his palatial home, which stands hidden yonder on the little island.

"But the supremest joy of my new experience was when I saw the face of your precious sister,

Lilian. Oh, I could not believe it at first. I had been awakened to consciousness only a little while when I heard footsteps lightly treading across the room; the curtains moved, and lo! her sweet face appeared from the curtains, wearing a smile. I was bewildered for a moment. If an angel had appeared at the door of my shrouded chamber I could not have been more astonished. Then I recognized her fully. I called my long-lost pupil, my sweet little friend, and she fell down upon her knees by my little couch and showered my face over with kisses and cried for great joy. Oh, it was such a happy meeting! We have lived so happy here together. She is the sweetest child I ever knew, so meek, so pure, so intelligent, so docile. In each others society we have beguiled the hours that would have been otherwise lonely and dreary. We have roamed together over the deep valleys and high yokuls of Iceland as we did many happy days back at dear old 'Gethsemane.' One of us visits my mother's grave very regularly." She paused to brush away the tears, then continued sadly: "It is a dreary place here sometimes; and though I love my father, I sometimes wish I were back at beautiful old 'Gethsemane' as I used to be in days gone by. I have asked my father to leave this strange place and go with me to America, where all my pleasant, familiar associations are, but there is some relentless power holding him here, and it has even sequestered him to a hidden abode of perfect seclusion. He never associates with any one. Many years ago he withdrew from the faces and friendship of

mankind. He claims his reason to be a sacred one."

At this juncture the perambulating party returned, and soon preparations were being made to take leave for their previously arranged sailing. When all was ready, Leland ordered Rheubin to set sail for Skada fiord, and they soon were gliding over the deep, clear water in a southerly direction. The sea was calm, and the glorious sun shone with a brilliant radiance. The party were all out on deck, enjoying the delightful sailing and the grand scenery. The land was like the incline of an amphitheatre running down to the water. The clumps of trees, elevations of rocks and the chains of distant hills presented a charming, picturesque scene. Great flocks of eider-ducks sailed over now and then, and continued their flight to scale the crest of some distant cliff of perch on some verdant island. Occasionally the flapping of wings would cause them to look up and see a large ember-goose sailing over. Aside from this and the occasional bleating of the sheep that grazed on the grassy slopes, all was perfectly calm and quiet.

"It would be remarkable," said Leland as he dived into a large red apple, "if Mr. Linden, being the scientist that he claims to be, could not tell us how to find the Gulf Stream."

"And it would also be remarkable," answered Edward drily, "if you could not tell me after I had told you."

"Oh, is Mr. Linden a scientist?" asked Lilian, pleasantly surprised.

"Yes, I establish phenomena and scientific

problems on the surface of silly pedantry—you remember that Dillion wished in a kind of circumlocutory way, and at my expense, to display the grand fact that he knew there was a 'Gulf Stream.'"

There was a hearty laugh, and Edward felt satisfied with his remark.

"Mr. Linden seems to take a delight in delving into Natural or Human Philosophy with his science," rejoined Leland good-humoredly. "He wants to leave the impression that his knowledge of the varied sciences is by no means limited—a shrewd method by which to elude the necessity of admitting that he cannot tell us anything about the Gulf Stream."

The smiles on every face were evidence that these exchanges of irony were appreciated.

"Mr. Dillion is inclined to want to bring about a discussion on science that he might possibly have an opportunity to show that he is somewhat of a scientist himself."

"Mr. Maldemar, the young scientist will do well if he can produce a phenomenon for all that you will show him to-day?" asked Leland of the old Dane, who was much amused and who seemed to be drawn out from his somber mood, habitual with him, into high spirits.

"Yes," said the old man thoughtfully, "there are geological features in Iceland's great yokuls that no scientist has ever heard of. I am sure he will find food for his brain if he is hungry for scientific research."

"Pshaw, this is all out of the question," ejaculated Edward. "Science isn't to be regarded when a

delightful pleasure-trip is on hand. I do not propose to take it on myself to be Grand Oracle of this party, even if you do hint strongly your desire for such a misfortune."

"Edward is very much interested in romantic science since a few days ago," said Leland with a significant laugh; then he turned away to talk to the old Dane, who was gazing at the dark outline of the distant fiord to which they were going.

"Romantic science," said Edward to Lilian, who was by his side, "that is the best science after all, isn't it?"

"I do not know, Mr. Linden; I believe it is,—I am almost sure it is," she said with a mischievous smile.

"What makes you wear such a happy face today, Miss Dillion?" asked Edward wistfully.

"I suppose it is because I am happy," she said carelessly.

"Quite likely, but that is quite a pointed, decisive answer,—I wonder if you could turn out a good many such brief but clear answers in the course of an hour's conversation?"

She laughed heartily, more surprised than amused at his peculiar wit and agreeable humor.

"I don't know, Mr. Linden, I have never been so strangely interrogated." Her eyes were brimming with suppressed laughter. "I am sure I can manufacture a great many—one for every query put to me like the one I have just disposed of."

"You are a strange hostess, Miss Dillion."

"That is quite a compliment, I am sure," and she looked off toward the ocean indifferently and tossed an apple-core into the water. Edward

studied her face critically for a moment. He was not in the least baffled or discomfited by her quick and seemingly indifferent answers; rather he was just warded off. He was amused at her. While he gazed at her, his ingenious mind was contriving a pleasant, amusing question that was inoffensive and amusing in its self-gratifying purpose.

"Miss Dillion," he began, leaning lazily over the railing that he might get a fair look into her face, "what manner of speech would you suggest that I use in asking you questions? I am eager to fall upon my knees before your Majesty to do you honor,—you are a queen, you know; your quick, decisive answers are only, and can be only the prerogatives of one 'speaking with authority' —a *Majesty!* 'Speak, for thy servant heareth.'" He laughed a little at her puzzled expression.

"Pointed questions are most agreeable," she said at length.

"Questions to the point, then?"

"Oh, no!" she said, blushing a little. "I mean questions not so much at random."

Edward was silent, smiling and almost laughing. But he knew from the expression on her brow and in her eyes that he had ventured far enough on the subject under discussion. While he had begun to talk to her in sincerity, she had turned the conversation into a kind of sport in which she meant to amuse herself by tantalizing him. He knew, nevertheless, that she was anxious to change the subject. But he could not, however, content himself without taking a good hearty laugh at her. He knew that she had

evaded the subject in his mind when he had asked the first question, and he thought that the best way to defend himself was by laughing at her, which he did successfully. There was a prolonged silence.

"Really, do 'Coming events cast their shadows before them'?" asked Edward at length.

"Why do you ask?"

"Why, I was wondering if our rambles and excursions and sight-seeing where we are going will be as gloomy as the shadow it casts before it."

"And what is the shadow? I see none."

"*You!* I do declare you are the gloomiest piece of humanity I ever saw! You stand there like a speechless mummy, never saying a word unless I break the silence."

"Quite complimentary! You are a skilled physiognomist, or I am burdened with a marvelously changeable visage, for just a little while ago you were asking me why I wore such a happy face."

"That is very reasonable, for you know women are very changeable."

"How provoking! Is it any wonder that I am a strange hostess?"

"Ah, this is all nonsense," said Edward, trying to assume impatience.

"If I am to do my part as hostess, I think I should have my choice as to what subject we discuss."

"It shall be just as you say, most noble hostess," he said, with a face whose expression would have looked like true submission, as he meant it to be, had he not been so full of laughter.

Her glance at him told her just how sincere he was, and she smiled and looked away toward the shore. They were silent, for to Edward's surprise she did not choose any subject to discuss. Nevertheless, he determined it should be so if she wanted it to be.

At length they reached the Skada Fiord, and were soon on land, walking along in the dark shadow of a craggy cliff that looked dreary in every aspect of gloominess. The old Dane's first instinctive thought was to take them into a dreary cavern.

"I like the adventure there is in exploring these great caves," he explained as he led them into one. "There is a peculiar fascination about their gloomy cells that always charms me."

"You are not alone in your fascination," said Leland, as they proceeded down a narrow gravelly avenue. "I think there are several of us who share the delights of this exploration."

"Oh, how romantic!" exclaimed Edward, pausing suddenly to realize the charms that surrounded him. "This must be the abode of phantoms."

"If you don't come on," said Lilian sportively, "you will be left to lose yourself in the labyrinth of phantoms."

"I will be like the poor, unfortunate Theseus, who was caught in the Labyrinth of Crete, won't I?" asked Edward with a winning smile. "But it will be fortunate for me, provided you will be the good Ariadne and lead me out."

"No, I will not be so foolish as Ariadne was,—you remember she was deserted?" Lilian laughed merrily.

"I suppose I had better go along with you all if I don't want to get left," he reasoned with an assumed air of dignity. "And just now I recall those sacred words, 'If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch,' which fact reminds me to go along now."

Soon they were passing through a series of cells and vaults and chambers most magnificent in their beauty of scenery and novelties. To Edward this cave was quite different from the one called the Sacred Tomb, for in this one there were no indications of human inhabitants.

On and on the old Dane led them through the dreary cavern, which seemed to have no end of dreary cells and chambers; and each chamber they entered was more gloomy and comfortless than the one preceding it. It was some time before they at last emerged from the great cavern to find themselves standing in the open air on the other side of the huge cliff. They had penetrated through the massive bluff by way of the subterranean passage, and were facing a charming prospect of a broad tableland covered with sand and lava beds. The Dane led them on, pausing now and then to admire a beautiful geyser, a novel sulphur-pool or a horrible volcanic chasm.

"It has been many years since I visited these parts," said Amphion, as he turned to Leland and Paix, who were admiring the wild, gleaming beauty of the landscape with exclamations of delight. "My wife and I used to come here years ago to camp here for a long time simply for the pleasure there was in it. We have spent many happy days here, gathering curious stones from

the sands which had been thrown from the great volcanic beds, and I would shoot the eider-ducks and geese and auks that resorted here in great numbers."

"You surely stay close to your beautiful home, then," said Leland, glancing at Mamie, who was looking dreamily toward the huge, snow-covered mountain, that looked high and cold in the distant northern sky. She was thinking of that precious mother, and tears were in her eyes.

"Yes, I like my old home," said the old man, and they suddenly stopped on the very edge of a great bluff which overlooked the beautiful Skada Fiord.

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Mamie, as they looked out over the wide expanse of the tranquil fiord.

"Oh, yonder is your yacht down yonder, brother," exclaimed Lilian in glee.

"Yes, and isn't this charming?" said Leland, taking off his sailor cap and smoothing back his forehead to admit the delicious incoming breeze sweeping in from the sea. "There is such a peculiar sensation in the many romantic features of this beautiful Northland."

All walked around the bluff a short distance to obtain a better view,—all except Edward and Lilian, who chose to sit down and remain where they were. The calm, sedative virtues of nature entwined about them with that wonderful environment of love and beauty, and they, though scarcely aware of its effect, felt that there was nothing more than love needed to make them happier. Edward, fully satisfied to be in Lilian's presence,

was silent, looking away in the distance, while a faint smile lingered about his eyes and lips. She had given him a little rose, and he took his eyes from the distance and looked at the delicate flower, he compared it with the giver. He looked at the pure, transparent petals, and smiled as he saw their unmarred beauty;—smiled?—yes, for he thought of another rose—Lilian's pure heart—whose petals were as pure and unmarred as those he held so fondly in his hand. She had been away from society a long time, in fact, she had never known anything about society, and he wondered if on her return to America and her entrance into the fashionable world she would drift into the slums of frivolity and disgusting dissipations into which so many before her had fallen. Many a beautiful, innocent, pure flower had been broken down by a cruel hand and left for a world to trample under foot, and who knew but that this one would meet the same fate? He bit his lip at the thought, and would fain have asked God to forbid such calamity but for the thought that he had never acknowledged Jesus as his Saviour. The girl at his side was a mere innocent child, whose sweet but peculiar nature had been wonderfully touched with that singularly fascinating power with which many a Norwegian or Danish maiden has been distinguished. The wild, gleaming, sunshiny land of Iceland had endowed her with a new and romantic nature which added new charms to her winning person. All this was pleasing in the highest conception of the term to Edward; but he was skeptical; he was afraid the pretty little blossom would lose its sweetness in

the bitterness of a poisonous society. He looked up and saw her beautiful, innocent eyes fixed upon him; and she blushed, for she was not thinking that she would be caught looking at him so fondly. But the fond eyes had lingered too long. Edward smiled, and leaning near her, took her little hand in his and whispered softly to her:

"Will you tell me what makes you smile so sweetly to-day?"

"Why should you want to know?" she answered timidly.

"Because you were looking at me, and you surely must have been thinking of me."

"I was thinking of you."

"What were you thinking of me?"

"I was thinking of your statement that love was that virtue of life that made you happier than anything else."

"And is that all I said that time?"

She looked at him and smiled, and Edward saw in her clear eyes the look of deepest passion. Now no one but Edward could have seen that love-expression.

"You know what you said last to me there," she said.

"Yes," he replied gallantly, "and I can say as much to-day."

"Ah, you are a brave man, Mr. Linden, but you are too much of a coward to say that now," she said mockingly with the same smile. She looked at him with the eye of a critic and noticed with supreme satisfaction that he blushed exceedingly. He tried to speak, but somehow he was really a coward. He looked at her and all he

could do was to grin, and his blushing face colored deeply. She laughed heartily at him, and tossed a pebble into the water below.

"I am waiting," she said at length, soberly.

"How long could you wait?" he asked, somewhat regained.

"Oh, I suppose that I could wait a long time if I was sure that your answer would be the same then as it is wont to be now."

"I am sure my answer will always be the same."

"Oh, how dignified you look. It is astonishing to see you so brave. I believe you will finally sum up courage enough to say it very soon. You are plucky."

Just then the others of the party returned. Paix was telling some of his funny stories, and the others were laughing.

"Have you two fallen in love with the siren voices of the sea?" said Leland as they approached.

"We have fallen in love with everything that is beautiful here," said Edward as they rose.

"We must be off for the 'Lorelei,'" suggested Maldemar, and soon they were on their return. It was not long till they were on the bosom of the deep, sailing back toward the Oerajalf. The old Dane was in high spirits, and their return trip was spent very pleasantly as he entertained them with his quaint old legendary stories.

When Amphion and his little company had arranged to depart, Mamie lingered, and as Leland clasped her hand in his, she seemed to let it remain there tenderly. He glanced at her and saw

something in her face that he had never seen there before.

"Good-by, Mamie——"

"Oh, no, no, no!" she said, lifting her little hand imploringly. "Do not say that please. It sounds so much like parting forever."

He looked at her sad face. Tears filled his eyes. But she could say nothing. He smiled and turned away.

Only a few minutes later, Mamie looked back to see the beautiful "Lorelei" disappear behind the bend in the cliff just as they left the Oerajalf and entered the waters of the Fjorheim. She sighed deeply and the old man caught the pathos of her aching heart from the weary expression of her manner.

"Thou art sad, my daughter," he said as he ceased rowing. "Pray tell me what troubles thee?"

"Nothing serious, father; I was thinking of the past."

But this did not satisfy the good Dane, for too often he had heard these sighs in his earlier days, and had learned that there was more than a mere sad memory expressed therein. He drew her close to his bosom and wept passionately.

"O my child! My precious child! Thou art the perfect image of thy mother. Oh, many a day have I seen my precious, sweet Naomi, with that same weary expression on her face that I saw on thy face just then! Many happy days have we spent in our little shallop rowing over this beautiful fiord, while the glory of the heavens enveloped land and sea in its perfect beauty. I

sometimes think that I was cruel to her, for she did so long to go back to America, to the land of flowers, where the bouquets of love, peace and happiness bloom perpetually in the hearts of her Christian people. But the gods claimed me here to wait till they should call me to that mysterious battle-field where all the great war-kings and those that have fallen in battle shall be assembled. If I should have gone away wilfully, their wrath would have been incurred against me, and when death came upon me I should have been hurled into Miffleheim, the world of eternal darkness. I am a war-king and a hero, and to have gone away would have been to forfeit my honor and disgrace my royal ancestors. I could not go with her. Oh, how my heart bled for her. But I could not relieve her heart of its sadness."

"But, father, your religion teaches that the gods are as pleased with you when you disregard all their obligations as when you are perfectly obedient. Why, then, did you choose to obey them?"

"I could not afford to disgrace my progenitors, and besides, there is still another more supreme god, Alfadur, who shall have a new world to rise out of the seas after that great event called Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods, and he is all-powerful and omniscient, whose divinity is supreme above all things. His new world shall be blessed with his wonderful peace, and I trust that I may be promised an eternal inheritance in his kingdom after I have finished with the heroes in the court of Odin in Valhalla. Haven't you read from the *Eddas* where it say:

"'*She sees arise*
The second time
From the sea, the earth
Completely green;
Cascades do fall,
The eagle soars
From lofty mounts,
Pursues its prey;
All ills cease,
Baldur comes,
The heavenly gods
Together dwell
In Odin's halls.'"

Mamie looked at him tenderly, and said slowly and earnestly: "Father, I will read you a beautiful story some time, a story about that new world. My God has heaven for His home, and all His saints shall go there to live with Him forever. You will not find it in the Eddas, but in the Holy Bible."

The old Dane took his beautiful daughter in his arms again and clasped her to his bosom, crying as passionately as a little child. His tears fell like baptismal showers upon her brown tresses.

"O sweet memory of a happy past! Mamie, Naomi, your precious mother, has often told me that wonderful story. Child, you are as devoted to your religion as she was. When I look at you I sometimes forget myself and think that I am looking into the beautiful face of your mother."

"When did mother die?"

"Ah, child, it was in the earlier part of our

married life." His voice was faltering and his lips trembled. "But she has gone to a happy home which her God and your God hath prepared for her; and if there be any blissful eternity, I am sure I shall join her there."

Lilian was silently listening to the strange language of the old Dane. She thought of her own mother. In a short while she would see that mother and clasp her arms about that motherly neck and kiss her as she oft had done in childhood days.

When Mamie had once reached her room, she sank wearily into a chair and burst into tears. For an hour she wept bitterly. Then drying her tears, she knelt by her chair and appealed to God to hear her humble petitions. Then she sought communication with the sainted spirit of her mother.

"O mamma, while thou lookest down upon thy child, oh do not judge me harshly, for, O mamma, thou hast known what it is to love. O mamma, I love Leland with all my soul. I pray thee, do not think your poor child wicked or callous for it. Though his hands are stained with the blood of those whom he has murdered, his soul has been redeemed and washed white as snow. And though I can never unite my life with him, may I at least be permitted to love him?

"O Holy Spirit, strengthen me, teach me and guide me, lest I err."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE sky was beautiful, the sun brilliant, and a gentle breeze swept over the little island. Love was adrift on every gentle zephyr and a song of beauty was its story.

Mamie was alone, sitting on a great bearskin rug, which she had spread out on the ground in a cluster of vines under the arbor, and she was fondling endearingly a beautiful albatross. She began to sing in the Icelandic language an old love-song which she had heard long ago from the lips of her mother. The melody rippled in rapture down the silent arbor-aisle, and every leaf and tendril fluttered in the breezes as if laughing with delight at the rapturous strains as they floated down the aisle. She looked and listened, but neither seeing nor hearing anything, she resumed her song. The albatross ate heartily of the crumbs which she held out to him in her hands. When the song was finished and the bird had disposed of all its food, she took up her book and began to read. For some minutes she perused unmolested the story she was reading; then like the thrill of a magic touch the touch of Leland's hand upon her arm thrilled in her veins and she shuddered convulsively as he spoke:

"Ah, child, you always delight to be alone!" he said tenderly, as he lifted her hand and bowed over it. A flash of sudden indignation rushed to her face as she recalled the horrible memory of his murderous life, and she sprang to her feet and snatched her hand from his.

"Ah, your touch is profanation!" she exclaimed with indignation. "See, they are stained with the blood of an innocent girl!"

He gazed at her proud, indignant face, and his face grew pale with a hopeless look of despair. For the first time since his sins had been pardoned, that habitual scowl darkened in his brow, and a gleam of bitterness and desolation and misery shone in his feverish eyes. He gazed fixedly at her. There was an intense silence, during which nothing but the ticking of his watch could be heard. Then raising her little hand proudly, she bowed haughtily and turned abruptly away from him.

By this time her proud nature began to feel the wound of her deliberate offensiveness, and with a sense of perfect contempt he watched her ascend the granite steps into the house. He turned wearily away and left "Palace Garden."

What had come over her? He was astonished and sorely perplexed over her rude manner toward him. He went on his way down to the shore, pushed his boat out into the water, but looked back and saw her coming hurriedly down the little path. But he did not wait for her, and in spite of her pathetic calling for him, he rowed indifferently on across the Fjorheim.

"She shall atone for her rudeness to me," he

said bitterly to himself, "or I'll eat every image and idol in the Hindoo Pantheon."

There was a gentle breeze coming in from the tepid waters of the Gulf Stream, fanning the waves gently, while a perfect tranquillity brooded over land and sea. The stillness made the calm more intense; and to one who is not acquainted with the peculiarities of Icelandic climate and the long days of perpetual sunshine which gives it the universal name of something like the Land of Nightless Hours, there is something enchanting about it. The observer delights to see her hills and ever-green-clad mountains as they swim in purple seas gilded with golden hues pouring from the burning beaker of the midnight sun. To him who wanders over her valleys and hills and along the clear brooks, there is something charming in the musical ripple of these brooks as they wander over their meandering beds and leap the craggy boulders. On looking out over the deep, narrow, confined fiords of Iceland, one would think that a prodigy had occurred and that a prodigious quantity of the fabulous Golden Fleece had showered its golden locks over the calm ocean. Such are the feelings produced on the mind at night.

The Oerajalf was glistening brilliantly on this particular night, and there was only one person on the "Lorelei" who was watching and observing its glory. Leland was strolling about on deck with a leisurely gait, delighting himself with the pleasant indulgence in drinking in the beauties which painted the Oerajalf with her dazzling colors. He could not sleep because of weariness of mind. He was troubled, his heart ached; he was

sinking every day into deeper hopelessness. He sought ease and rest by strolling about on deck, where only the voiceless vigils of night could watch him; and for a fleeting moment he forgot his morbidness as he looked out upon the magnificent spectrum before him, as it glowed upon the beautiful arena. The quiet was enchanting; the brooding of peace was beautiful to behold. One would think that the royal supremacy of that mighty Poseidon pervaded in full dominion over the deep fiord. This Poseidon's gentler spirit rested with calmness and quelling power over the sea.

Leland was leaning carelessly over the guards, pitching into the water pieces of the cocoa sherbets which he had been eating, when something grating against the side of the vessel attracted his attention. He leaned further out, and discovered it to be a small keel knocking against the side of the vessel, and its only occupant was the figure of a man nodding drowsily over his oars. Leland called out lowly but distinctly to him:

"What is your purpose here!" Whereupon the man looked up quickly.

"I came for you! Hick ah valla van dika!" he seemed to come to himself as he spoke. "Come quick!"

"Come where?" inquired Leland in a tone of apprehension, as he leaned down anxiously to hear the answer.

"Oh, sir, Mr. Burnett, come with me across the Oerajalf, for a stranger is dying there in Palace Garden, and he is just raving to see some one he calls *Abel,* the orphan boy Leland. By the

gods! he is raging, distracted! He leaps and bounds like a maniac. He is constantly calling out unknown words such as 'infidels, hades, Dives,' and 'hell'; then he wails out pitifully, 'Poor Leland, my once happy friend.' Oh, sir, come quick!" cried the woolly-headed boy whom Leland recognized as the doorkeeper of Palace Garden. His distorted features winced with convulsive excitement, and his whole frame was a bundle of antic actions while he spoke in confused accents.

"Why should I go there?" inquired Leland curiously.

"To appease his raging spirit. The Dane sent for you."

"What is the stranger's name?"

"He would not tell, only he wished to be called Cain," he answered impatiently. "Hurry, he is dying!"

Leland was astonished, bewildered. What could be the meaning of such proceedings? The mention of the name Cain touched his memory with the time when his murderous hands changed him from the happy boy Leland to the bloody murderer Cain. He thought of one whose youthful face used to shine with the luster of a happy heart. That face had been the greatest idol of his boyhood affections. But now! O torturing memory of a quickly-blighted life! of a youth's fair morning beclouded with eclipsed dreams of a glorious future! The curse of skepticism had destroyed the tender bloom of their youth. He had been redeemed, but this poor wandering Cain, oh, where would his eternity be!

In a short time they were speedily skipping over the waters of the Oerajalf toward Palace Garden. The silence was intense. The landscape swam in opal seas flecked with tints of golden sunlight.

With skill and rapidity the lad propelled the craft across the fiord, and at length they landed at the island.

They soon entered the house and passed down the silent, sumptuous corridor till suddenly the lad stopped near a small closet door and here listened. All was quiet, except now and then a low wailing cry came in suppressed tones to their ears. In spite of his strong fearlessness, Leland shuddered at the sound of that lamenting voice. Judas shook his tousled head in that way peculiar to himself, and there was an expression of horror on his face. He opened the little door and stooped and passed in, bidding Leland follow him, and when the door closed they were in intense darkness. Judas lit a lamp, which gave but a dismal light, and they proceeded. Down a narrow descent of steps between two dark, dingy walls of stone. It was like descending into the depths of some endless hollowness of the dismal haunts. The deeper they descended the darker did the night grow, and the more death-like and dreary grew their muffled tread. They passed chambers and dark vaults, then began another descent which terminated in their destination, a dismal chamber, sufficiently lighted.

On a low couch lay a sick man, apparently asleep. The only watcher was the old Dane, who sat close to the bedside of the man, holding the

latter's hands in his strong grasp. Amphion bowed to Leland. Judas motioned Leland to the bedside and pointed with a whisper:

"That is he,—knowest thou that face?"

Leland bit his lip, and for the first time in many years he wept for his dying friend and enemy, Alton Tolliver. Ah, yes, it was Alton, come at last to his last hour. Soon a dreadful eternity would claim his soul.

By some means Tolliver had wandered over the world, a hopeless mundivagrant, seeking ease for his dreary soul, but everywhere he went he became more savage. At last, tired of the world, he had wandered away to Iceland; perhaps to partake of the balm which came from the icy breezes of her frozen coasts and lands. He had roamed like a wild savage through the valleys and over the hills till at last he ventured to enter the vine-clad stone door of Palace Garden, when he was caught by the old Dane and put into the dark secret cell, to await further punishment.

Leland stood by for some minutes, looking at the distorted features of him who was once the dearest friend he had on earth. While he looked, a sting of conscious regret pierced his very soul as he thought of the awful tragedy on the little bridge at "Gethsemane," where he had looked with flaming eyes upon the dying man, who had fallen from the blow of the pistol ball in his side. While he stood looking at him with tearful eyes the dying man opened his wild, frenzied eyes and looked savagely at Leland.

Just then Mamie and Lilian entered the little cell. At the sight of Alton's familiar face Mamie

recoiled with horror, screamed with the terrible fright, and clung to her father like a frightened child.

"Come on, dear child of my heart," pleaded the poor dying wretch, extending his weak hands toward her. "Come, put your little hand in mine, for I have longed, ah, these many years, to feel its comforting clasp. Won't you come this once?"

"Now but a moment, and I am gone, gone, gone forever. Mamie, O Mamie, the only surviving idol of my perishing soul, bend your beautiful face near mine and press one sweet farewell kiss upon my parched lips. Oh, won't you? I am dying!" She looked at him with tears in her eyes, but shook her head.

"Oh, just one kiss upon my hand, then?"

"No," she said firmly, "I will never kiss the hand that is stained with the blood of innocent people."

She looked straight at Leland, whose eyes instantly met hers. Leland's face grew white; his heart almost forgot to beat; and a tremor touched his lips as if an agony of greatest pain were torturing his very soul.

"Farewell to all the world. The world is leaving me! Oh, how can I be dying! I will not die! I will not!"

He made one more effort to struggle from his couch, but his weakness was too great; he fell back; his lips curled; his eyes rolled back in their death-like cavities; his whole body shook with one convulsion; and he was Alton Tolliver no more! There was a great, echoless silence. The living stood looking down into the face of the dead.

Death's gloomy shadows hovered dismally over the little dark, dingy cavern.

At length the old Dane motioned for their departure, whispering as they went: "Tell Judas his spirit has departed, and send him to me at once."

They departed, and after a long and wearisome ascent they reached the corridor. Lilian hurried away to find Judas, and Leland doffed his cap to Mamie and departed. But he did not smile as she had so often seen him smile when he bade her good-by. His eyes were angry; his lips were tightly compressed; and on his brow was that habitual scowl that had been there so often when he was at "Gethsemane."

As he descended the long arbor she looked wistfully after him and wept bitterly. She had loved Leland Burnett every dreaming moment and every waking hour since she had first known him, and how much better it seemed to her had they both died in their innocent youth. But instead, the bitterness of life had tainted his youthful purity and had made her life unhappy indeed.

When he disappeared among the vines at the stone door, she turned away sad-hearted and went to her mysterious chamber.

Alas! Poor Alton! His life had ended at last. His restless, savage spirit had gone out into that strange, untried Eternity. Ah, such a life as his had been! She remembered him when she hoped that the halo of happy youth encircled about his boyhood days. Yet she remembered that she had always distrusted him, and now she had seen the prophecy of her suspicions fulfilled.

Aside from her aversion, incurred by his cruelty toward her, she entertained a very tender feeling for him for the sake of earlier associations. He had ceased long ago to be her friend. Some time in the far past God had seen fit to take her precious mother from her; and now poor Leland, the one whom she loved so dearly, had at last grown weary and had turned away from her with feelings of keenest resentment. Oh, how utterly friendless and rejected and despised and scorned she felt. There she was in a secluded home, far away from her beloved land, in a foreign land where the faces of loved ones she never met. The only happiness she could entertain was that her dear father would be with her. Even Lilian, whom she had learned to love so dearly, would soon depart with Leland to join her anxious parents in America. Only a few more weeks, and all the beautiful land of Iceland would be enveloped in the long, long darkness of Arctic night; the dreary hills and mountains and valleys would be buried in snow and ice; and the gloom of superstition would pervade the haunted darkness of night on the Oerajalf. Almost driven to frenzy by these torturing thoughts she threw herself across her little bed and gave herself up to passionate weeping.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BEFORE the long shadow of night began to hover over the land, the beautiful "Lorelei" was in mid-ocean.

Their voyage was calm and undisturbed, and they landed at last on the American shore. Taking the train, they were soon flying for the Capital. Lilian gazed with rapture in her soul and joy sparkling in her beautiful eyes at the familiar land of her birth. The sunshine was like it used to be in days gone by; the flowery meadows and ripening grain were what she had delighted to see in her childhood; and she was glad to get back into a land where the voices of familiar friends and American citizens greeted her ears, and where the gloom of Arctic superstition did not prevail. She had been deprived of all these pleasures for the last two years, and on her sudden return they filled her with unspeakable joy.

At length they arrived in Washington. It was late in the afternoon, and the evening had begun to creep over the city, with all its autumnal beauty in grand display. While Lilian was exultant with excessive joyful anticipation of so soon seeing her father and mother, scarcely less was the rapturous delight which Leland felt over the wonderful success that he had had in such

joyful triumph. He knew that his successful efforts in bringing back his lost sister to his broken-hearted mother would confer upon her the greatest happiness that he could ever bring her. As they turned into the street that led to Mr. Dillion's mansion, Leland drew the child close to his side and kissed her,—ah, so tenderly!

"Why are you crying, brother?" she asked curiously, as she observed the tears that had gathered in his eyes.

"You should ask the angels why they never weep. You know, Lilian, they rejoice without weeping when the lost lamb is found; but we weep and rejoice with tears when the lost is found."

Just then the carriage stopped at the street gate and they stepped out. As the carriage went away, they walked on silently up the flower-lined walk-way to the magnificent building. To her surprise Lilian saw Donnie grazing in the corner of the yard and called to him cheerfully that he would come to her quickly. He lifted his head quickly; his ears pointed, and he looked dubiously at her for a moment. She started toward him, continuing her cheerful calling and holding out her hands toward him. He drew nearer, then retreated, pranced gaily about, then advanced again less shyly, but even this time he was not entirely confident of her identity and trotted off sideways, looking askance, till at last she succeeded in decoying him up to her. She patted him on the head, uttering words of endearment which he had heard from her lips many times before. This completely won him, and he played about her gleefully as one who suddenly recog-

nized a dear friend. He followed her up to the doorstep, seemingly pleading for the privilege of entering with her.

Leland entered with her and rang the door-bell, which was immediately answered by the pale-faced, meek Ruth, who opened the door and looked blankly at them. Lilian advanced and smiled..

"Who is it, Ruth?"

"Why, Lordy mercy, child! when did you come from the Golden Gate, de New Jerusalem? Well, well, I do declare; it is Lilian. Come in, let me kiss your hand at least?"

Without the least diffidence Lilian clasped her in her arms and kissed her tenderly.

"Where is mamma?"

"Alone in the drawing-room," answered the maiden, her face all beaming with the light of an overjoyed heart. Lilian hurried on to the drawing-room and met her mother, who had heard the last question, and had risen with a feeling of sudden anxiety to ascertain who the questioner was. She glided like a tender yielding child into her mother's arms.

"At last, O mamma! Sweet mother! God has let me come back to you!" The mother could speak no word, for her heart was overjoyed. She even failed to notice her son and his friend when they entered.

It was a happy evening at the Dillion mansion. The description of such felicity is beyond the weak inadequacy of human scrawl to tell. When the skill of the pen can accomplish the task of depicting the blissfulness of such a reuniting, the zenith of mental power will have been reached.

A calm night brooded over the great city, and only the monotonous tone of the din and roar of the great machine houses and manufactories disturbed the calm night. A happy mother slept that night the sweetest dreaming slumbers that had invoked her weary heart in many months. A happy daughter slept again in the little bed in which she had slept in innocent childhood days. And the happy brother and son was found upon his knees, pouring out the grateful adorations of his heart to Almighty God, whose divine aid had helped him to success. The load had been lifted from his burdened heart. The slave had won his freedom, and lo! he was a *king* again!

CHAPTER XXXII.

LILIAN was now seventeen years of age, and each hour and day of life touched her face and form with more excellent grace and beauty and symmetry. When she smiled there was sunshine all about; when she spoke or laughed there was a melody too sweet to be termed an earthly voice; and when her eyes looked up into the clear heavens —or into your eyes—her pure soul was there also, and a love deeper than ordinary human passion had its fountain there. Many of her childhood fancies she yet retained, which rendered her loveliness more charming. Having come from a strange land in which she had lived so long, her many friends were strangely curious to see her, and in her presence they gazed with wondering eyes at her marvelous beauty. They entertained a kind of reverence for her. Young men, to do her honor, sent miniature bouquets to her, with cards on which were the words, "To the beautiful maiden of Iceland."

With well-bred calmness and perfect amusement, Lilian observed the manifestations of jealousy among the society girls, who envied her beauty and accomplishments. Lilian knew that she was beautiful, but she regarded that quality

of her person with but little thought, conceding that it was nothing more than ordinary. She had not thought, when looking at the coarse, common features of those uncomely people whom we term ugly, to compare them to her own excellency of graces. In such matters she forgot herself entirely. She remembered the fact only when her mother would kiss her and make the remark, "My precious child, when will you cease to grow beautiful?" Often she was reminded of it when Ruth would arrange her beautiful hair, for she almost invariably would assert excitedly, "Lord bless me, if you ain't the very imps of the angels! Such pretty eyes, such bewitching eyes, and such a kissing mouth! Oh, you are beautiful!"

All these praises, besides many others, were lavished upon her; and yet they did not cause the least disturbance in her gentle, reserved disposition. She went on, day after day, dreaming the sweet dreams of girlhood, with only one little passion restless in her heart now and then.

It was a sweet passion that had touched her heart that memorable night when she stood at the threshold of Palace Garden, awaking something there that she could not understand. That little passion had never gone to sleep again. It was awake, but had never stirred. Often when the memory flitted across her mind she would involuntarily press her fingers to her eyes and her hand would wander to her heart as it did that day. Many times when this strange sensation stirred in her heart, she would wander out in the yard among the flowers to dream and smile

and reflect where no one would detect the little innocent secrets in her face.

On one of these occasions, when such thoughts had awakened the sensations beyond the usual limit, she had stolen out among the flowers, where she found Donnie, who came to her as if giving her a cordial welcome. She sat down on the rich grass and began to make a wreath of flowers around Donnie's neck.

It was one of those beautiful, tranquil afternoons in August, when the last glorious display of sunlight beauty arrays itself in all the grandeur that autumn can impart. She was humming a melody to herself, and on her face was a pleasant smile. Something like a quick movement caused Donnie to look up quickly; and before she knew it, Mr. Linden was in her presence.

"Miss Dillion, may I care to hope that my presence is at least agreeable to you?"

Lilian laughed. "Mr. Linden, you always have that classic, formal explanation or excuse to offer. I wish you would always concede that I am always perfectly delighted to have you with me." There was a charming frankness about her words, and there was a lovely smile on her face.

"Oh, that is generous!" laughed Edward. "Now, how much I feel at home."

Edward lay down on the grass at Lilian's feet and rested his head on his hand.

"Miss Dillion, may I call you Lilian?"

"That is what you should have called me all the time. Yes, I would rather be addressed simply that way."

"That is what my heart says every time I speak

to you the other way. Now I can speak my sentiments freely, 'Lilian.' That is the sweetest name I have ever heard."

Her eyelids drooped; the color tinted her fair cheeks; there was a smile on her lips.

"I have come here, dear Lilian, to tell you a little story—one that is as old as the human race, yet one as new as the first sunbeams that peep over the eastern hills. But first you must tell me something: do you remember the time and place of our first meeting?"

She looked up diffidently, answering in that low, sweet tone that he had heard on the Fjorheim:

"Does the little bird ever forget to sing?"

"No, but why that question?"

"Then my heart never forgets to cherish the fond memory of that golden midnight when I first met you."

He laughed with satisfaction.

"No, the little birds never forget to chant their daily melodies,—and do you remember the little photo of my likeness which I gave to you soon after that?"

She answered by drawing her little gold watch from her belt. Its lid flew open, and she held it up so he could see his own likeness, neatly fitted in on the lid. While he looked with a smile of satisfaction, he drew his own watch from his pocket, opened it to turn it to her. With a deep blush she read the skilfuly carved letters of her own name,"LILIAN," shining in its concave surface.

"That, dear Lilian, is all that I have to gratify

my longing eyes when I am away from you. There is your name." He pointed to the engraving. "But here in my heart is your fair image. O Lilian, I have worshipped that image every hour of my life since I first knew you. It is the greatest source of all my happiness. I have cherished the hope of retaining it forever, but somehow I fear that the fair image may vanish and leave me in bitterness. O Lilian, since I have met you, I have felt noble aspirations which never came to me before. What is that which causes me to go down on my knees before Almighty God and give to Him my life, my all, to be consecrated to His service? It is the purity of the innocency of your spotless soul. What is it that has wrought such a change in my cynical nature? It is that fountain of love which has welled up in my heart—Love? Yes, love for you!"

A joyous mocking-bird sang his wonderful song as he swung to and fro on a slender twig swayed by the gentle breezes of evening. Donnie grazed at a distance, and there was a strange stillness just at this pause of the conversation. Edward and Lilian gazed at each other as if there was a resistless charm holding their gaze upon each other. So straight and prolonged was their gaze, and so intense became the stillness that they could hear the passionate beating of their hearts. At length they smiled as if they had just finished reading the virtues of each other's souls. The bridge of love was completed; and, forever, over it would freely pass their love, their sympathies, their sorrows and their happiness, binding into an

everlasing unity their nobler passions for each other and for God.

"Dear Lilian, may I hope to sustain my frail heart with the affection which I entertain for you, or do you spurn me because I should not approach you on the subject?"

Her only answer was the voiceless language of a tear which stole pathetically over her fair cheeks as she looked at him with a strange but certain yearning in her pleading eyes. She could not say. She was young and inexperienced, and she felt that she had suddenly come upon a strange vista whose untried but entrancing avenue led into the sacred realm of a holy sanctuary, and she was afraid to enter.

"Your mother approves the course I have pursued in the manifestations of my affection for you; I have told her before I dared to approach you on this tender and sacred subject. If you are afraid to trust me——"

"You conjecture wrong, I do not distrust you."

"Then if you will not speak the word my heart longs to hear as an answer, you will please express it in another way. If you love me, Lilian, place your little hand in mine."

He waited impatiently. The moments seemed so tardy. Then at last, as if some inspiring touch of some heavenly hand had thrilled his veins, her little hand moved like the gentle sweep of an angel's wing, and was laid gently and confidingly in his. Then his firm, manly hand grasped it tenderly, and he looked at her joyous, rapturous face, studying the physiognomy of its certain expression of rapture. The silence was al-

most too sweet for human expression. A view of that veiled beauty of a lover's Eden was offered, and they saw and felt the holiness of that love as they never had before. Again her little hand went to her heart, remaining there as if its touch allayed the painful yet sweet agitation which throbbed with every pulsation of her heart. Her lips moved, but no words passed them. Her eyes smiled, but no beam of their shining beauty did she cast upon Edward. She simply drooped her eyes charmingly, as millions have done before.

"Enough, dear Lilian; go to your mother and tell her that you love me, and that some day you will be mine."

She promised to do so, and kept her promise.

* * * * * * *

Mysteries in life are of a necessity. Not very seldom do we meet with the most intricate problems in human destiny, natural physiognomy and mysteries of life. Frequent intercourse with the crowded throngs of humanity affords many illustrations of the mysterious philosophy of human destiny and human existenec.

But the mystery of mysteries is the passionate qualities of the soul,—the inner-man. When perfect satisfaction blesses the human mind and heart, the virtues of such happiness are ineffable, —they are a mystery! When absolute discontent seizes the heart, there is a desolation there beyond the power of language to express it.

This terrible, gnawing discontent had again come over Leland Burnett. One bright day in June he walked through the yard of his grand "Gethsemane" home to the picturesque cliff just

outside the Arcola gate. A delicious scent of sweet flowers floated on the meandering breezes. Now and then a bird-melody wafted itself down through the forest aisles and mingled its strains of love with the murmur and gurgle of the clear rippling brooks that tumbled ecstatically and as if laughing over the rocks and ran down through its narrow bed.

Leland was all alone. The family that was living with him—Mr. and Mrs. Herman—were gone off to gather wild flowers. When Leland had reached the brook that found its way out along the shadow of the bluff, he heard a sweet voice singing in the distance. The melody had something of pathos in it. He stopped to listen to its enchanting strains. It was as if the very sunbeams were vibrating with the music touched by the magic power of some hidden Orpheus. After several stanzas, the melody wafted off into a sweet refrain as if an angel had suggested the prelude, then a low, soothing cadence concluded the song; and even the echo suddenly hushed. Leland sighed deeply and turned himself about as if he had suddenly waked from a reverie.

Leland shook his head and smiled bitterly. Long ago his heart was wont to cherish the sweet sentiment of that song when its thrilling melody, yet sad refrain, fell upon his distorted soul, when its resistless chanting was the voice of the beautiful Icelandic maiden, Mamie Homean Maldemar. As he walked down the road toward the little brown bridge, he thought of the woman he loved so well. How hard was his lot to bear. Why had God, Who was so merciful, denied him

the boon his longing heart had so long craved? How unjust it seemed to be deprived of the only real happiness this life can afford. As he walked away, a terrible moroseness seized him, and his Christian heart turned radically to a savageness and profound bitterness. A sullen, austere spirit supplanted that gentler nature, and that old fierce, brutal, cynical nature possessed him with all its destructive pollution. His desperation was intensified as he stepped upon the bridge and once more beheld the everlasting fadeless blood-spot, the everlasting token that indicated the awful tragedy executed with his own merciless hands. Its ghastly realization haunted his memory, continually gnawing at his conscience like the destructive, consuming plague of pernicious moths. He stopped abruptly as his eyes fell upon it, and he stood there gazing at it with fixed, stony eyes.

"Truth is pure and guileless," he thought, "but, ah, how bitter it sometimes is! I almost cherish the fancy that if this tragedy were false, it would be sweet to my thirsty, cynical soul."

He stood there for several moments, gazing, while the past years of his tragical life rolled before him like the black haunts of an eternal perdition. If the sun had ceased to move in its lonely orbit, and the earth had lost its equilibrium and gone whirling through the boundless universe like some reckless, heedless meteor, it would not have disturbed his complete oblivion to all his surroundings.

At last the musical ripple of a merry laugh touched his ear, and he looked up and sighed heavily. It was the sweet, laughing voice of Mrs.

Herman, who was young and beautiful and innocent. Leland knew the voice, but could not locate it. He looked about him, but could not see any one. Drawing his hand across his scowling brow in a kind of perplexedness, he resumed his journey toward the Temple.

Just as he emerged from the forest, he saw Mr. and Mrs. Herman emerge from the steps of the Grand Basilica. They were talking and laughing merrily. Mrs. Herman's beautiful face was turned up to her husband's in loving, obedient trust; and while her lovely eyes looked tenderly into his face, his face was turned smilingly down upon her, his eyes drinking in all the beauty of her charming loveliness; and he smiled tenderly and passionately as he held her to his breast.

There was an exquisite profusion of pretty flowers strewn with exuberance over the "Typical Altar of Faith," and over the polished granite steps. These, with the luxuriance of the various other kinds of flowers growing in exquisitely regular arrangement in the grassy yard and on each side of the concrete-paved walkways, made more charming the grandeur, and imparted to it the likeness of the "Poet's Dream."

As Leland looked upon the scene, his soul was lifted for a moment to a perfect, refined taste of the beauty of the human conception of a grand paradise; and in the midst of the little Eden there appeared the first two beings of His Own Likeness—the perfect images of his own Greatness. Though they could not see Leland, he was close

enough to see them and hear their conversation, which was as follows:

"What quality of the heart, indeed, makes life worth living?" inquired Mr. Herman in a tender tone, as he held her face by placing his hand under her chin and turned it up that he might look down into the immaculate soul that was mirrored in her beautiful eyes.

"It is love," answered the beautiful wife with a sweet smile.

"Is it so, indeed?"

"Yes, you know—we all know—it has been whispered in our hearts—that love is all that is left to cherish; there is nothing at all worth living for save Love!"

"That is right; love alone is worth living for—worth dying for! It is the only sunbeam that touches our hearts and puts a value on life. It alone, among all the other bits of pleasures, which are only mere phantasms fitted in deceptive garbs and capable only of instigating the keenest despair and disappointment, is the priceless virtue of this mysterious existence."

Mrs. Herman drew herself up from his clasp and sighed:

"God pity the desolate heart that can claim no blessed love!"

Leland could stand this no longer, but bursting into a flood of blinding tears, rushed away from where he was standing, going stumbling along over the stumps and roots toward "Lonely Vicinity."

Once in the road and out of hearing, he sat

down upon a log, giving himself up to the rankling of an unutterable despair.

"Ah, how true!" he muttered, "she is right; love only is worth living for. But do I possess it? Alas! no, I am scorned, disdained, turned mercilessly away. I can 'claim no blessed love.' She invoked God's pity on the soul that was desolate of love; but how useless! All prayer and intercession is a flaunting mockery!

"Then, if love is worth living for, and I have it not, what need I to live any longer? Why not end my existence now?" He dropped his head in a moody attitude.

He rose with a feverish smile lurking in his feverish eyes and advanced in the direction of a tall cliff to which a delirious phantasm was decoying him and whispering to his distorted reason that its yawning abyss contained a realm where peace and oblivion reigned supreme, and where all weary spirits might have rest forever. But his footsteps were arrested by the sound of another voice singing in the distance. It was a maiden's voice. He thought he had heard the beautiful song before. This is what she sang:

"O what is life? 'Tis like a flower
That withers and is gone;
It flourishes its little hour,
With all its beauty on;
Death comes, and, like a wintry day,
It cuts the lovely flower away."

Its grand, pathetic sentiments awakened him from his delirious, frenzied state of mind, and by

some strange providence the immortality of the soul suggested itself to him, and he remembered the quotation which he repeated to himself:

"'Tis heaven itself that points out a hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man."

He leaned his head against a tree and gave himself up to meditation. He was aroused by a touch upon his arm, and he looked around to see his aunt standing by his side. Tears were in her eyes.

"Leland, what is troubling your heart?" she inquired. "There is something very painful to you; what is it?"

Leland took her in his arms and strained her to his heart, weeping passionately the while.

"Aunt Nettie," he managed to say sobbingly, "it is a trouble that I must bear alone. You could not help me. I am tired. Go home and be at ease as to where I am. I am going away for a while."

He turned and walked wearily down a little narrow path in the direction of the village. Mrs. Harwell returned home with one expression ringing in her heart,—"I am tired."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MIDNIGHT storms! Raging like ten thousand black tempests over the bleak, frozen land of the North!

A storm was coming,—wide—deep—dark! The sky rolled angrily up with the hidden snow. In the north there was a dull, red gleam, low, near the horizon, and just above it hung a deep, black cloud. Near the zenith a few lusterless stars shed a chilly light through the Arctic darkness.

"Storm is coming!" said the old Dane solemnly, and with a strange, unusual but significant meaning.

"Yonder is the Death Arch! See, the Rainbow Bridge! Ah, Glory,—Victory—Naomi! at last! I see the sons of Muspelheim rushing across the great bridge and the flames of burning fire trailing after them. Onward they go, riding over Bifrost. And look, it breaks under their horses' hoofs! But joy and victory! They disregard it, and I see them hurrying on to the battlefield of Vigrid. Ah, there is Loki writhing and twisting, yonder is Odin's hall. And I see Hela's followers and the Frost Giants. The gods of Valhalla and Miffleheim are assembling.

"Hark! I hear the sound of the Gialler horn

as the summoning Heimdall blows it. A great devastation is raging. The gods advance to the Vigrid battlefield, led on by Odin. At last, O Joy,—Victory—Glory! It is Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods!"

The old Dane stood apart on a large, icy rock, with his sinewy hands stretched toward the black heavens, and by the faint light of his small guiding lantern on the little ponies that were hitched to the sledge, Mamie and Mr. Paix saw a strange rapture beaming over his noble ruddy face. He had never looked that way before. The wind came over the gloomy hills in a gushing tempest, driving snow and sleet in wildest commotion before it, and absolute darkness settled over the land. The wind howled and roited among the trees and hurried on its shrieking career.

"Father, let us go home. The storm is terrible!" cried Mamie with a shudder. But she could scarcely be heard. The Dane heard her not and continued his strange talking; but the tempest grew so loud that his voice was lost in the roaring commotion. Mamie looked back at the dark entrance of the gloomy cavern-tomb which they had just visited and she would fain have retreated to its shelter. She called her father again and again, but she heard no answer. She tried to look for him but the stinging pellets of driving hail and sleet blinded her.

The storm grew fiercer.

Then suddenly a great vivid light flashed over the land and across the skies. It burned brilliantly for a moment—blazed brighter than the sun; and the snowclad hills and mountains looked

like vast prodigious fields of glittering jewels. Amphion was close to his daughter and they looked at each other a moment; then Mamie extended her hands to him and he shouted as he reached for her:

"Hick ah valla; Van Dyka, Loki," which means: "The vengeance of the gods of Muspelheim be upon the wicked; but peace forever to the pure and good. O Loki!" but just as Amphion was about to reach Mamie the light vanished forevermore. Intense darkness swallowed up everything.

Then hark! A deafening roar echoed dreadfully and horribly over the resonant hills and mountains. A deep—terrible—hungry roar raged and bounded over the great mountains and tumbled into the valleys—then rose—leaped wildly back—retreated—advanced,—then galloped away in the distance. Its echoes were followed by a terrible earthquake, the dreary hills and mountains seemed to rise and fall like the huge heaving bosom of a tempest-tossed ocean. It was a violent earthquake—more violent than Iceland had experienced for a long time.

Mamie was thrown violently to the ground. The Dane staggered and fell, but rose again. And Paix caught to the cavern rocks but they were hurled from him and he fell. Great masses of huge rocks and great quantities of snow and icicles crumbled and tumbled from the bluffs and cliffs and fell round them. They could not see each other.

As the sturdy old Dane tried to stand on his feet he was suddenly hurled to the ground by a

falling mass of snow and ice. Then, crash! down came a mass of jagged rocks and mashed him into the snow.

The earth still shook and the land trembled and "The everlasting hills did bow."

At length the quaking quieted to calmer oscillations, and finally to slight tremors. Mr. Paix rose. Mamie rose. But neither could see the other.

They brushed the snow and cinders from their clothes the best they could, and went groping their way through the intense darkness. Mamie knew not which way to go.

The snowstorm increased. The bitter wind howled and moaned about her and shrieked through the barren trees. She stumbled in the darkness, fell in the snow, rose again, and hurried on, knowing not whither she went. She groped her way on and on till suddenly she went down, down, down,—oh, horrible, yawning abyss! —crash! into a deep snow-filled ravine. She was insensible. What?—Dead?

All was desolation and gloom and darkness! —Choas!

Hours passed away, and then the dim faint dawn of day showed faintly that the night had passed and that the day had come.

The storm had ceased and a weird stillness reigned everywhere. The sharp snow-covered crests of the mountains rose like huge traditional monuments against the black sky.

Paix grew cold and numb and lost all hope of finding the others. He started back to "Palace Garden," when, shrewd and careful and ever-

watchful, he noticed an unusually large heap buried under an immense snowdrift, and he conjectured that some one might be under it.

He proceeded to remove the snow, and after a great effort he reached a pile of rocks. He brushed the snow from the crevices and suddenly exclaimed:

"*Mon Dieu!* here he is!"

At last, after much exertion, he managed to disinter the bruised and mangled and unconscious old Dane from his rocky, icy grave. He was yet alive, for his heart beat faintly. But cold, stiff and frozen, his body lay upon the frozen snow; and his swarthy features and tangled silver locks looked death-like as he lay with his life-blood oozing from his mouth.

Paix looked solemn. "He is almost dead."

He managed to take him home; and at last he rested on a soft downy bed in the comfortable quarters of his beautiful Palace.

Leaving watchers by the bedside of the dying King, Paix hurried away in search of Mamie.

As fortune would have it, he had not searched long till an old hag met him on her way from the village to "Garden Palace" and she informed him that she had fortunately found "the beautiful girl" unconscious, and buried almost entirely in snow in the deep ravine; that she had carried her to a neat, comfortable little cabin in the village; that "the beautiful girl" had regained consciousness, but was absolutely unable to return to her home. "She wants her father to come to her," said she.

"Her father is slowly dying from a fatal wound

received from last night's storm," answered the Frenchman.

"Then I will return and tell her."

"No, indeed, never! It will kill her! Wait till she is stronger. Is she comfortably cared for?"

"Yes, Amphion's daughter is in good, kind hands. May the gods preserve her life."

She turned and walked away through the snow and darkness.

Paix drew his furs and rugs more closely around him and drove on hurriedly toward the village.

He arrived at last, and hiring a lad to hold his team, he went up to the door of a low cabin and knocked. He was answered by a gruff old woman who partly opened the door and looked at the strange visitor.

"Is one Mamie Homean here?" asked Paix kindly.

"Yas, Amphion Maldemar's daughter is here."

"Say to her that Paix has a message for her."

The woman closed the door, and all was silence and darkness again. Paix waited and shivered with the cold blasts of the bitter north wind shrieking about him. At last the woman returned and admitted him.

Paix's attention was called to a low pallet bed in a corner of the room, where the Dane's daughter lay suffering, perhaps dying. He looked tenderly at the pale, weary face of the suffering girl. Her eyes were closed.

"She is resting now," said Paix to the woman of the house. "I shall come to see her again

to-morrow. You can tell her that I will come. Good-by."

"Good-by."

Paix stepped out; the door closed behind him, shutting him out from all that was comfortable, and he hurried away to "Garden Palace." Once he looked back and a few flickering lights showed the dim outline of the lonely village. He sighed and urged on his team.

Paix went often to the village to see Mamie, who showed but few signs of recovery. Death seemed to hover over the desolate, dreary, shadowy land. The severe winter grew more bitter all the while.

At last frenzy seized her, and while no one was in the room she rose, dressed herself the best she could, drew her heavy furs about her, and staggered from the room out into the bitter cold. She looked wildly about her and murmured:

"Leland—Naomi—my Mother—O Father—is this death! I am cold." She moved on and on like a slowly creeping shadowy spectre, and was lost in the Arctic darkness.

The old Dane was slowly sinking. "I want to see my daughter, 'Fjonkon,'" he murmured.

"She is in the village sick from the injuries received in the storm and cannot come now, my lord," answered Paix.

"By the gods!" exclaimed the old Dane furiously. "And you have not told me! Is she recovering?"

"Yes, slowly," answered Paix.

"Poor 'Fjonkon!' good-by, my dear sweet child

Give me wine! I am sinking—sinking—sinking! Come closer and hear my last words, for my voice is growing weak."

The man obeyed and the Dane continued:

"Give my daughter this letter when I am gone. I was aware of her absence, but did not know but that she was in her room, and dreaded to see me suffering. But, poor thing! she is suffering too. But she will get well and be happy. She will weep when she reads my letter, but in it she will find expressions of joy and victory, for I am going to enter the wide-open door of Valhalla. In my letter I have invoked the blessings of the gods to rest upon her." He gasped for breath, then exclaimed as he rose to his feet with a sudden impulse of strength:

"Hark! I hear the thundering Thor! I see the wide-open doors of Valhalla! look at the flying steeds, the flying ravens! Ah, Victory! Yonder are the Valkyrior. I am one of the 'chosen slain.' The storm has slain me. I am going. Farewell! Come on, Naomi, ah, Naomi!"

He stretched out his bony hands and there was the triumphant smile on his face; then he fell—dead!

They laid him on his bed and after a few hours' waiting he was laid away to rest by the side of his beloved Naomi. The King—the last royal descendant of the line of Kings—had gone to feast in the magnificent courts of Valhalla.

When Paix returned he saw from the brow of a hill down which he was descending a wonderful light on the Island. He saw the blazes leaping toward the black, starless heavens. He was

astonished. What could it mean? He hurried on, and when he arrived at the great, heavy gate, he saw the dead King's Palace on—fire! Great flames leaped and twisted and roared through the darkness of the Arctic night like the blazes of a strange and new and more terrible Hades.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed Paix.

He sat down and saw the beautiful Palace burn to ashes. And he was startled by a strange voice wailing behind him and he saw the pale face of Mamie near him. She was looking with a strange bewilderment in her beautiful, sad, suffering, brown eyes, and her thin, wasted form dilated as she extended her wasted hands imploringly and inquiringly toward her perishing home. Yes, it was Mamie, her face pale and suffering,—her beautiful brown hair was flowing in rich waves over the furs about her shoulders.

"I have come home to my father," she said in a dull, sad voice. "Tell him to come to his suffering daughter, for I can't go any farther—I am—so tired."

"Your father is sleeping with the heroes of Valhalla," said Paix. "He is dead!"

"O father! father! why didn't you wait for your suffering child?" She extended her hands toward the gloomy cavern. "I am coming—coming—coming—" She paused, then went on: "Oh! —I am—so tired. I have no home to rest in; it is all ashes, ashes, ashes, now."

She staggered backward and was about to fall back upon the hard frozen snow, when she fell into the arms of—Leland Burnett!

He clasped her passionately to his heart.

"Mamie! Mamie!" he whispered. "Poor Mamie! I have come back to you, my darling. And—you —are—dying!" His voice was broken, as he strained her to his heart. He had never felt so happy since he held her in his arms in the silent sanctuary of "Gethsemane" Temple.

She looked fondly up into his handsome face and passionate eyes and smiled faintly; but soon a shadow came over her pale face.

"You love me, Mamie?" he murmured with a strange eloquent rapture.

She shook her head and smiled sadly while tears filled her eyes.

She dropped her head over against his breast and fainted.

"*Mon Dieu! Chere* Cain, what brings you here?"

Paix shook his hand and looked perplexed.

"I will tell you later. What shall we do, Paix?"

"*Voila!* Cain, the Palace perished in the flames!"

"Yes, I see; but why has it perished? Who burned it?"

"I do not know; we have just returned from burying the Dane and find it burning!"

"What! Amphion Maldemar dead!"

"Sure!"

"How fortunate that I have come to my darling's rescue!" and he kissed the pale face of the woman he held in his arms. "I see," he went on solemnly. "Disaster has swooped down upon the mysterious mansion and its secluded, superstitious, pagan master in the lonely, dreary Arctic midnight of the long changeless night of the

Northland. We will go back to America, bidding Iceland farewell forever!"

"Good!" exclaimed Paix. "We must be off right away."

And soon preparations were made to leave this land of ice and snow and everlasting darkness.

They boarded the "Lorelei" in a short time and bade farewell to the dark, gloomy, traditional, superstitious shores of frozen Iceland and sailed away to the Sunny South.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE thrilling melody of a mocking-bird was heard in the tree-tops in front of the old homestead on the banks of the still, muddy Cumberland; a calm, sedative repose seemed to bless the long-deserted home; and the voices of eary spring-time were merry with rapture and glad songs of nature.

The sunshine of dawn stole through the window and painted gold upon the wall; a gentle breeze whispered gladness in the room and made silver-crested ripples on the bowl of clear water which sat on the center-table; a cluster of beautiful pink flowers that had been plucked from the early dawn nodded in these breezes as they hung their fragrant blossoms over the edges of the vase near the windows; a large white cat sought felicity in the golden sunlight that fell like the touch of Midas on the rich crimson rug at the door, and he dreamed the morning sunny hours away in feline tranquillity. Through the window came the distant melody of a lad's morning-song, which was interspersed with halloes something like the cry of a Mohammedan muezzin crying the hour of prayer.

The room was fragrant with the odors of vio-

lets, and the smile of love rested serenely on everything.

In his cushioned easy-chair rested the aged Roscoe Homean with his venerable head thrown back and his calm blue eyes gazing listlessly out through the window toward the golden sunlit prospect of the southern landscape, while in his lap lay a copy of the Talmud which he had been studying.

Close by his side on a soft, downy bed rested the wasted form of Mamie Homean. Her pallid features were weary and pensive; lines of sorrow traced about her pretty lips and showed marked symptoms of very evident mental as well as physical suffering.

She had been unconscious during the voyage from the North Land and it was not until long after Mrs. Dillion and Lilian had journeyed South with her to her childhood home to which they had learned that the long-lost Roscoe Homean had returned, that she became conscious again.

It was one night when she heard the dear voice of her foster-father near her bedside in prayer that she opened her bewildered eyes to find herself at her old home again,—at last, after so many years of sorrow, humility and suffering. At first she could not realize where she was; then, as the sunlight suddenly breaks through the clouds she saw, with supreme rapture, that it was, indeed, "Home, Sweet Home," and that her foster-father was by her bedside praying as she had heard him in the dreamy childhood of long ago. Though feeble she was, she rose quietly and knelt near him and wept like a child, and this weeping was such

a relief to her. She felt the burden lifting from her heavy-laden heart and gladness soothed the pain that had tortured there so long.

The familiar voice of her foster-father had awakened her from the long dreaming apathy, and she was Mamie Homean once more.

When he had closed his sacred supplication, Mamie stole her trembling arm around his neck, kissed him and whispered softly:

"Dear father, please do not go away from me any more. I have come home at last to stay. I have no other friend but you. Oh, won't you stay with this poor broken-hearted, friendless orphan?"

The old man rose, put her from him, and looked at her a moment in wonder; then he smiled and kissed her, for he knew that she had awakened.

"And I have come home to stay," he said tenderly. "My sweet little bird, my little Mamie, I will never leave you."

"Oh, I can get well now," and her voice was faintly happy as she hid her sad beautiful face against her foster-father's bosom and wept passionately. There was a holy silence.

And on this beautiful spring morning as the venerable, aged, superannuated minister sat in his easy-chair, a holy calm settled over his serene countenance. His wrinkled cheeks and brow and silvery locks were glorious evidences of a long life of labor and misfortune, but there was a holy, divine expression written on his thin pale face which satisfied the observer that he was a

chosen saint of glory, and that a peaceful sunset would bless his last days.

The mocking-bird flew away across the fields toward the river, and carried his song with him; the dreaming cat on the rug bounded away after a bird that twitted on the cistern pump; and Mamie turned to Mr. Homean and broke his meditative reverie:

"Father, you have never told me who murdered my foster-mother and carried you away. Can't you tell me now?"

A shadow of pain flitted across the furrowed brow of the old man and he sighed deeply.

"Yes, Mamie, I will tell you now;" he paused a moment and looked away through the open window, and tears came into his eyes. "Alton Tolliver, Mr. Mathes and another robber, Sam Holden, were the men who stopped you and asked you if my wife and I were at home that memorable morning. Alton never told you on his deathbed that he helped to murder your foster-mother, did he?"

"No, sir."

"Well, he did. They came to rob me of the money which I had already given to you and Leland; but failing to find it, of course, they demanded it of me and threatened my life if I didn't give it to them. And as I didn't make any effort to find it they threatened to kill my wife and to capture me and keep me in custody till I felt disposed to yield. Sam Holden shot her down while she was trying to defend herself and me, and they carried me away to an old hidden cave dungeon somewhere in the wilds of Mon-

tana mountains and kept me for three years; and after they learned that I had disposed of my wealth by bequeathing it to you and Leland, they released me. Holden died soon after and Mathes disappeared mysteriously and I never heard of him again.

"I rejoiced that I was released and was happy on my way back to my old home, when Alton Tolliver overtook me in St. Louis and demanded that I must never return to my home again; that if I did he would burn it down some night while I slept in it. He further demanded that I change my name; that if I ever let my friends know that I was still alive and Roscoe Homean, my home would be burned while I slept. This he said; no more, and turned away. I have never seen him since, but I learned that he died a desperate wretch in Amphion's dungeon in dreary Iceland. Then I came back to my old home free and unmolested. But I found it decaying, comfortless; and my dear loving companion gone." He paused; his silvery beard quivered as his lips trembled, and he brushed away the blinding tears from his eyes.

"The last memeory of my dear, precious wife was as I saw her looking pleadingly at me for help, with the shadows of death fast gathering about her face. She was on the floor, dying, and I could not help her. Oh, how terrible!"

He sobbed bitterly.

"You know the rest, how she was buried, what became of you, etc."

"I turned sadly away when Alton Tolliver threatened destruction to my home, and assumed

another name, studied for the ministry, got license, and went forth to preach the gospel to sinners. I rose rapidly to distinction in the ministry, and God crowned my labors with success. I never knew you were living till I saw you again at the dedication service at the Temple near 'Gethsemane.' Then my heart was glad to know that you were a beautiful, intelligent Christian lady. I almost hesitated to tell you that I was your foster-father, but I felt that I must.

"It is all very strange—how Leland became an infidel, a vagabond in the sight of God, how you wandered over the world homeless, and without a friend, how you were so strangely and mysteriously and providentially led to find your real father, your own native land, and to learn the mystery of your past life. Thank God, it is all over now and we are once more back to the beautiful home we used to love so well."

There was a holy silence and Mamie turned her face toward heaven and her lips moved in silent prayer while tears stole through the long silken lashes of her closed eyelids. She fell asleep, and while she slept Mr. Homean rose, took down his walking-cane and went slowly out through the yard and down to the little spring to get a drink of its cool water.

The aged old man looked silently down at the rippling water as it unrolled its silvery bands along under the verdant canopies along its way and sank away into the Cumberland by subterranean conduits like the fabulous Pirenean fountain of Corinth.

The old man was thinking of his tragical life.

He had been no coward, but rather than besmear his hands with the blood of mankind he had humbled to the Sciron Robbers of his happiness, and even though they did kick him into the murky sea of suffering while he humbly washed their feet on the Scironian rock hoping for pity and compassion from them, he was yet free from blood-guiltiness and at peace with his Maker and his fellowman in the calm serene sunset of his life. The supremacy of Pax was his realm of peace.

He took a pleasant stroll about to the familiar haunts of the old homestead and was absent for some time.

While Mamie slept she was awakened by a call from the door-bell.

"Come in," she said; and slowly, like a spirit, an old woman entered the room and paused to look at Mamie. Mamie recoiled and screamed as she recognized the hideous face of Madame Fauk standing over her.

"Fear not. I am no hideous messenger from Loki's black world, I bring you good tidings." The woman took her seat near the bed and asked kindly:

"How is the poor 'Fjonkon' to-day? Better, I hope?"

"Mamie, I have come all the way from Iceland to Cairo, Egypt, and from there to America since you saw me last. Here is a letter that your father requested me to bring to you, which he wrote on his death-bed.

"When your father was young he purchased me as a slave from a slave-dealer in the—well, I

must never tell my nationality—anyhow, he purchased me as his slave and took me to Iceland.

"Amphion made me swear to the gods that I would immediately after his death bury his body by his wife in the cavern-tomb, then burn his beautiful mansion, that no strange eyes should ever behold its magnificence again while the world should last. *I burned 'Garden Palace!' I kept my oath!*"

Mamie looked bewildered at her. Madame Fauk burned her beautiful home in the far North Land! But she fulfilled her oath, which surely must be sacred, for she had sworn to the gods of her dead father. Mamie sighed; she was satisfied; she simply said, "Go on."

"His money was in a hidden marble vault in a decaying Mosque in Cairo, Egypt. He commanded me to go to Egypt, procure the money (for he had taken me there years before and had shown me where he had hidden it), and bring it to you. This I have done, for that was a part of my oath. Here is the beautiful golden casket; in it you will find ten million dollars and an instrument of writing which gives you title to his possessions in Iceland."

She paused and smiled a moment, then folded her hands and went on:

"Thank the gods! My task is done; my freedom has come! I go back to Iceland to dwell in peace and happiness and blessed seclusion in the lonely cavern-tomb till the gods call me to the joys of Valhalla. There I will watch as a faithful vigil over the dead bodies of my three friends, Amphion, Naomi, and Van de Dreary.

Good-by, my dear little friend, 'Fjonkon.' I am going away to the North Land!"

She smiled and turned away. Soon she was gone. Mamie watched her slowly disappear down toward the river, then sighed and laid her head back upon the pillow. All this was so strange to her—the mysterious woman, her connection with her father, the golden casket, the burning of the mansion and the fulfilling of oaths were all new to her.

She wondered what could be in her father's letter. She broke it open and unfolded the sheet, and in perfect silence she read:

MY BELOVED "FJONKON":

Good-by, Mamie, mine. The gods have summoned me to the grand feast. But "good-by" is for but a short time—you will come to me—to your mother, somewhere, ah, yes, somewhere. Man is immortal and all good people will meet again to live and love forever together. Madame Fauk will be good to settle my affairs after I'm gone, and all that I have is yours; take it with my blessing. The gods be with thee ever, is my prayer.

You have always wanted to know why you were called "Fjonkon." I write it now, and for the sake of your dead father's and mother's memory never tell it, for it is a sacred name. Your mother had a dream one time soon after you were born and she heard a voice saying, "Thou shalt call the babe "Fjonkon," the child of sorrow; she must suffer much for my sake."

Naomi always wanted to call you Fjonkon

You have been "a child of sorrow," but thy father on his death-bed invokes the blessing of the gods upon thee henceforth and forever.

Be good, be true, be faithful.

I am the last of my royal family and Madame Fauk burns my beautiful palace, leaving not an earthly trace of my dead ancestors. My ancient dynasty becomes extinct at my death. And I am proud of the brave, heroic warriors—the noble line of kings to which I belong.

I die in peace and glory!

Peace be to thee forever.

Your loving father,

AMPHION MALDEMAR.

Mamie kissed her father's farewell; and as she laid it on the table, blinding tears filled her eyes and she wept long and silently as she thought of the father whose life had been stormy, superstitious, but brave and honest, and which had gone down in paganish darkness—forever? Nay, nay—for her father was too pure to be eternally lost. She believed he was in glory.

After many weeks Mamie recovered. She was content to be happy at the dear home of her childhood. Happy? Yes, as happy as her dear old home could make her; but she was "tired" and weary, and the fair, sweet face grew more hopeless each day.

She was standing one evening reading a letter which she had just received from Lilian Dillion. She looked away toward the glowing sunset and she heard the aged Mr. Homean singing a sacred hymn down by the river, and she smiled

sadly as her peaceful lips murmured with pathos:

"I know I ought to be thankful, for the dear Lord blesses me abundantly. Oh! why am I always sad?"

How keenly she felt the sense of that "vacancy" of which Leland had spoken when he first loved her!

She had many friends who came to visit her from Nashville. She gave them weekly social receptions, and always a gay party came to Mr. Homean's beautiful home to enjoy the pleasures of Mamie's "Parties."

One beautiful morning Mamie was sitting in her parlor-room, reading from the Nashville *American,* when she noticed an announcement that Leland Burnett would lecture at the Vendome Theatre in Nashville on the night of July 16th, on his famous new lecture, "The Prince of Darkness."

The paper fell from her hands and she uttered a pitiful groan and murmured:

"Merciful Lord, please lift the burden from my heart, for it is more than I can bear."

She buried her face in her hands and fell into meditation. She pondered whether she should go to hear him or not. She had not seen him since he held her in his arms in Iceland, and she was so hungry to see him. While she meditated, Mr. Homean came in and exclaimed:

"Mamie, do you know that Leland will lecture in Nashville to-morrow night? Just think of it!"

"Yes, father, I have just been reading it."

"Why, Mamie, you are crying! What is the matter?"

"I think I must be foolish; I was thinking of Leland," she said with a dull, sad voice.

"Don't cry, darling, dry your tears and be cheerful. Shall we go to hear him?"

"Yes, father," she whispered.

That night as the venerable old minister led his beautiful, elegantly and richly dressed foster-child into the brilliant theatre where thousands of faces were assembled, he felt grateful and happy that the foster-children that he had raised were making his last days the happiest.

When they were seated, Mamie fancied she saw a familiar face across the crowded spacious gallery, and lifting her opera-glass to her eyes she recognized the faces of Mr. and Mrs. Dillion, Lilian Dillion, Edward Linden, Mr. Paix, Mrs. Herman and many other friends whom she used to know in Washington. And her heart felt glad to know that Leland's friends would come so far to show how much they appreciated him. She saw poor Mrs. Tolliver nearer to her with some other friends in Nashville and she said to herself as she pitied her:

"Ah! Poor Alton!"

She was impatient to see Leland appear on the stage, and her fond eyes turned very often to the decorated rostrum, where her lover was soon to stand.

Suddenly a loud burst of applause rang wildly over the crowded galleries as Leland Burnett came upon the stage with other distinguished gentlemen in attendance. The applause grew wilder with renewed enthusiasm, and it was some time before quiet prevailed.

Then after a brief introduction, Leland Burnett rose and came forward, and said in part:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It was my pleasure to be in your midst many years ago and I am delighted to say that my heart is overflowing with gladness since I come to realize that I am permitted to be with you all once more. I am grateful for your presence.

I come to you this evening with a message that is born of a theme that is fathomless and profound in its vast expanse. Philosophers and critics and sages have been delving into its wonderful depths since men first began to solve the Mystery of Existence, and yet the vast speculation is only a mortal's dream of some goal that is never reached.

Infidels try to solve the great mystery by the prerogative of reason—Logic! They try to denounce the Bible on the merits of its inconsistency! They say there is No God! No Heaven! —NoHell! They try to slay the conscience that rises and proclaims that there is a God.

But in every instance since the first infidel rebelled, these efforts have proven an absolute fatuity.

They deny the Immaculate Conception, but the fact that such a man as Jesus Christ lived and died no man beneath the sun denies. Once infidels denied that when taken from the cross Jesus was dead—that He only swooned and was seemingly dead and that afterward he revived and never tasted death. Of course, there is not a single fact that sustains this improbable theory.

Jesus lived and *died!* Again infidels have been for all ages trying to chisel on the Rock of Joseph's New Tomb that there is no resurrection! They claim that Jesus is in his grave like the dead bodies of millions who have preceded and followed him to the tomb.

If so, why was this not the last of him? He came into the world to establish a kingdom, which he did; and why was it that his kingdom rose in spite of the persecuting world that rose in insurrection against him? He was as dead while he lay in the gloomy sepulchre as any corpse that was ever laid out in the everlasting repose of death. He had established his kingdom without pomp or splendor, formulated creed or founded Koran; at his death there was not a square inch of parchment in the world that contained a line that he had ever written, and yet his kingdom was raised up again! He came to overturn the kingdoms of the world, and to establish His kingdom—the Kingdom of Heaven. His kingdom was established without one drop of blood shed save his own, without a sword drawn save that of the impetuous Simon Peter, which he rebuked; and while he was in his shroud of death where was his kingdom? Who would dare to fight for his cause as he hung on the cross of Calvary? Would it be the blind to whom he had restored sight? Would it be the paralytic through whose withered veins he had commanded the blood to flow? Would it be the poor whom he had helped and healed and comforted and taught the plan of salvation? Nay, they could not, for does this kind build principalities and found kingdoms?

And yet his kingdom rose. His divine supremacy reigned; and to-day, after nearly nineteen hundred years, the mighty power of His kingdom has shaken the world. Jesus of Nazareth alone did more during the three short years of His labor in the scene of human action than all the combined forces of men during all the ages since God began to Reign and Rule. Jean Paul Richter said: 'He lifted with his pierced hands empires off of their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages.'

Since Jesus Christ came into the world His kingdom has survived every other kingdom in the world. Kingdoms have fallen; dynasties have perished; empires have been overturned and the whole world revolutionized, and yet His Cause stands impregnable against the imprecations and rebellions of foolish infidels and powerless unbelievers.

The infidel is a "prince of darkness." I see him weave his shining web about the tender sympathies of smiling youth, and decoy the mutiable heart into his seemingly brilliant labyrinth, then coil himself about it like a slimy reptile and strangle the noble spirit forever. I see him laugh then at the havoc that he has played. He is a cunning, treacherous fiend that sings siren melodies to those unsuspecting souls whom he plans to capture, and when they become his victims he howls and laughs with fiendish delight over his victorious conquest. He steals himself into happy homes, and for a while makes himself a generous, noble character, winning their entire confidence;

then he suddenly blots out the sunshine there forever and hurls the black clouds of Satan's infidelity where God's divine smile had blessed. He attacks young manhood in their hours of weakness, and destroys hope, happiness, aspiration, Love forever.

Young men and young ladies, I come to you tonight with a sacred monition. Do not listen to an infidel one moment of your time, for from him you can hope to obtain no comfort, no hope, no love, no light; all that he will ever tell you will make you gloomy, hopeless, desperate, and he will wreck your life forever.

The infidel says there is no God; but God says the "fool" has said in his heart there is no God. God says that it isn't given unto all men to know the mystery of his way. Infidels say that nothing is true that cannot be proven. God says, "That natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

The infidel sees only through the lens of Logic; God's people see through the bright open sunlight of the Spirit.

The Holy Bible says there is a God. But the infidel says the Bible is false and inconsistent. It is Not! It says that Christ would be rejected and crucified, and he was; it said that fools have said there is no God, and they have. It said that Christ would rule the world, and He does. It says, "As thou knowest not what is in the way of the spirit: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all," and that is true.

It says that men would be persecuted for Christ's sake, and they have been. Oh, infidel, there is not one promise in God's Word that has not and is not being fulfilled. If you can find one my cause is conquered!

The "Prince of Darkness" cannot believe what he cannot understand. That is his false heresy. Can he understand the mystery of our Existence? Does he not know that we do exist? And yet he says that he cannot believe that which he cannot understand. Ah, how inconsistent is his code of skeptical proclivities. He must believe that we do exist, and can he understand it? He overthrows his own argument.

The infidel is a coward, for he seeks to inject his poison in the hearts of the young. He attacks the heart when it is weak. He flees from the wrath of an outraged Jehovah and hopes to hide his sins in darkness, and says there is no God. He is a coward, for why does he not advance his cause in heathen lands as Christians do? He knows that there is nothing to sustain it. Why does he not organize into a united organization? Because his followers are few, and his doctrine promises no happy hope, no Eternal home, no everlasting rest and heavenly joy! He gropes in darkness. He is "The Prince of Darkness."

My message is to you who are yet pure and untainted from sin and infidelity, let not the infidel invade the sacred precincts of your happy homes, nor your lives which God made happy.

If I were a painter, I would paint my picture of an infidel in gloomy, dreary colors. I would picture him in a desert where the character of

virtue flees from him in fear. All is desolation about him and he is alone. I would paint a deep, dark, yawning abyss descending into Hell! And I would picture him dreaming in darkness on its very verge. Then I would paint a grim, ghastly picture of Death rising from the gloomy abyss and laying his cold, icy hand upon the dreamer's heart, then—ah, my brush would fall; I would shudder; I would refrain and close my eyes forever upon that terrible picture, for I am not the Eternal Judge!

But I would trace with my pen under the gloom I had painted, these words: The Prince of Darkness!

Leland Burnett then painted picture after picture of brighter life and of heavenly things. His figures of speech were grand, his imagery sublime. And when he at last finished, he was complimented with a wild enthusiastic applause which continued for some time.

His words were truth—the truth that has baffled the infidel in every course he tries to pursue. He presented few or no new phases of logic on the old, old subject of Christianity vs. Infidelity, for all the thoughts he presented have been brought to bear upon the infidel time and again; but a good thing can be repeated by some persons who put it in a clearer light than every one else together. So it was with Leland Burnett. His logic was absolutely convincing; his imagery striking; his personal delivery peculiarly impressive; and his eloquence rich with the most sub-

lime thoughts that ever fell from the pen or lips of mortal man. His argument was vividly convincing and impregnable to all infidelic powers to overthrow it.

He quickly disappeared from the footlights, and he was seen no more.

The crowded galleries were soon empty, and everybody went on their way to their homes rejoicing.

That night as the old minister drove home he asked his foster-child:

"Are you glad that you went to hear Leland, my child?"

"I think I—I must be wicked, father, for I wish I had not gone," and she hid her face against his shoulder.

"Why are you sorry you went, Mamie?" he asked tenderly.

"Because I love him, and yet I cannot keep it off my mind that he is a murderer."

The old man sighed, and was silent while they drove on to their home.

It was only midnight, and the family residing in one part of the house had not retired, for the lights were burning.

That night Mamie did not sleep till the distant rumbling of the freight train lulled her to repose.

The following morning about ten o'clock a party of friends from Nashville and those Washington friends whom she had seen at the theatre the previous night, "stormed" Mamie with their delightful presence.

They had come to her and asked her and Mr.

Homean to join them on a pleasure trip to the West—to "Gethsemane"! This was a delightful surprise to Mamie, and Mr. Homean consented to go provided they would not stay more than two months.

After a hearty dinner was disposed of, Mamie, with her foster-father, joined the merry "party" with a heart overflowing with feelings of joy at the thought that she would soon see dear old "Gethsemane," "Lonely Vicinity," and all that she loved and left long ago.

Soon they were on their way to the far West. But Leland was not there.

His marked reticence was something strange to all except Mamie. She knew, ah, too well, why he was not present. He was too proud to intrude into Mamie's presence. She had turned him away and he was struggling to conquer his unfortunate love.

At last, after a quick, pleasant journey, they reached "Gethsemane." Mamie wept as she beheld the magnificent building once more, and thought of all that she had learned and experienced when she lived there in the dreary long ago.

It was a season of joy to all the party, and Mamie did all she could to make every one happy, which they all highly appreciated, for she was an excellent hostess and they honored her with such distinction. She was delightfully entertaining to all; for her strange, eventful, romantic life and her travels and experiences had taught her very much, and everybody delighted to listen to her charming stories and narratives.

During the day they took pleasure trips over the mountains to the various scenes of interest, and at night they assembled again at "Gethsemane," and a pleasant "party" was given by the hostess.

CHAPTER XXXV.

One evening Mamie held her social entertainment as usual, though she felt sad and not very well.

Her many friends, who laughed and talked to the "Rich Heiress of the Pagan King," little dreamed that this was the last time that they would spend an evening with her. She laughed and talked with them more brilliantly than she ever had, and Lilian and Edward thought that her voice was richer and sweeter than ever as she sang the last song and rose from the piano.

When the guests had all departed to the village that night Mamie sighed wearily and went to the window and looked out through the moonlight toward the Temple as of old. She had never visited the Temple alone, and a peculiar impulse seized her to want to visit the lonely Temple alone to-night. The moonlight was fair, the night cool and tranquil, and she wanted to go there and pray for the man who built it.

She drew a pretty shawl about her head and shoulders and wandered out through the fair moonlight. Soon she reached the Temple, entered it and lit the lamps and chandeliers in the chapel hall. She looked about the silent sanctuary and thought of the many Sunday-school services she

had attended there; then of when she learned the terrible life of Cain, the Vagabond of Nod. She brushed away the tears and knelt by the altar and prayed long and silently.

When she rose she seated herself at the grand cathedral organ and played hymn after hymn she used to sing, and the grand music awoke slumbering echoes in the silent rooks of the dark mountain.

And while she played her memory traveled back over all her eventful past. She looked over all her trials and sorrows and thought how abundantly God had blessed her life and Christian efforts. She looked grand, noble and beautiful in the brilliant splendor of the chandeliers, as she was dressed in a black satin dress, perfectly fitting, and in her rich brown hair glowed clusters of beautiful white lilies. Her face grew calm with mingled hopefulness, submissive patience, and strange repose. Over her daintily sculptured features stole an expression of perfect resignation as she rose from the organ, lifted her eyes toward her Maker, she folded her hands and said softly:

"Dear Lord, I have said in the language of Thy Holy Word that 'Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird; the birds round about are against her, but I can say with another of Thy servants, now that 'The Lord hath blessed me hitherto' and——"

"And I have said that 'My heritage is unto me as a roaring lion in the forest; it crieth out against me; therefore have I hated it'."

The voice startled her and her hands fell as she beheld Leland Burnett standing near her.

His face was pale, and there was a tremor in his voice as he looked pleadingly at her.

She stood motionless, gazing up at him with bright, happy eyes. She faintly smiled and a blush crimsoned and burned on her fair cheeks, and with a thrilling trembling cry of gladness that told of a long-suppressed love she hid her face in her palms.

He came closer, and his wonderful voice sounded strangely passionate as she had heard it in that church that memorable night.

"Mamie, this is my last conquest: forgive all my wicked, sinful past; think of me now as a redeemed child of God; come to me, give your precious life to me, be my darling wife; and love me without shame forever!"

"Oh, Leland," she said sobbingly, "will you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive, darling."

"But I have turned you away and called you a murderer!"

"Which I was; which I am."

"And I have doubted and questioned your integrity."

"All this I know; and yet I have always loved you, Mamie. Please do not rehearse any more of those painful memories. Throw the past behind us and contemplate the joys of the present and bright anticipations of the future. Mamie, do you think that my love which has lived through the fiery furnace of my stormy, burning life is worth anything in this world to you?"

She was silent.

"If it is, come to me now."

She looked up at his brave, imperious, noble countenance, and thought of him in a different light to what she had always thought of him.

This was the first time he had ever looked like a new king to her. This was the first time he had ever seemed so absolutely worthy, for murder had always seemed so horrible to her.

"Come to your king, Mamie, for I am conqueror. As I said, this is my last conquest. You love me; can't you trust me?"

She bowed her head, leaned toward him, and as he took her in his extended arms and strained her to his heart, she whispered:

"Oh, Leland, I am conquered at last. I trust you most fully."

While she nestled in his passionate embrace he told her how his heart ached when she had bitterly scorned him; how her pure life had helped to save his soul from ruin; how he had suffered since she had so cruelly turned him away when she fainted in his arms in frozen Iceland after he had helped to save her; how he had struggled with his passionate heart to stay from her since that time; and how at last it had led him back to "Géthsemane," where he knew she had come to visit and probably stay.

He pressed his lips to hers and asked:

"Mamie, can you tell me what is the sweetest expression I ever heard fall from your lips?"

"Yes," she whispered softly.

"Then repeat it."

"I said once that I had fallen prostrate at the feet of a king,—that king was love,—that love was you."

"And is it so still?"

"Yes, and will be forever."

"Mamie, I had just come from the village on my way to 'Gethsemane,' and as I came by this Temple I saw you enter it, light it up, kneel in prayer by the shining altar, and heard you play the grand old hymns of old on this organ; and as I watched you I was proud, ah, so proud of you. Somehow I felt that this was my last conquest. Now you will be my life-companion, and I thank God that He has answered the prayer that you heard me utter by the little spring. Ah! yes, Mamie, I thank the dear Lord that He has given to me a princess, for you are a king's daughter."

He bent his head and kissed her fair face once more.

Mamie's and Leland's wedding ceremony was held in the church at Nashville.

Mamie was a beautiful bride, as she wore a beautiful white satin dress, and her long trailing bridal veil was of tulle. Lilian was the head bridesmaid and Edward Linden the principal groomsman.

As the bridal party entered the doors of the church the organist played a beautiful wedding-march; then, as the ceremony proceeded, the organist changed to a low, subdued, and sweet appropriate melody.

The building was full, save the front pews, which were reserved for the relatives and especial friends of the happy pair.

The bridesmaids and groomsmen grouped themselves at their respective positions; then, as the organ sounded low and sweet, the venerable old

Mr. Homean, who was already at his place, at once commenced the ceremony; and as the solemn ceremony continued Mamie looked down, and each moment she leaned more and more upon Mr. Burnett's arm. On the conclusion of the ceremony the newly-married couple and their attendants withdrew in much the same manner as on advancing, and as the bridal party left the church the grand cathedral organ sounded loud and jubilant.

Leland Burnett and his happy bride boarded the train that evening, and enjoyed a delightful bridal tour, by way of St. Louis, Chicago and other points, to Washington, to a beautiful new home which he had purchased on Pennsylvania Avenue. There Mamie began a new life, which she found in after years to be the happiest part of her life.

Soon after their return to Washington, Leland and Mamie were permitted to attend the quiet wedding of Edward Linden and Lilian Dillion at the home of the bride. The wedding was delightful, and Mr. and Mrs. Dillion were proud of the privilege to offer their beautiful and accomplished daughter to so worthy and noble a gentleman as Mr. Linden.

In the summer-time Leland Burnett and his happy wife resorted to the cool, quiet precincts of hidden "Gethsemane," to enjoy its pure, delightful tranquillity and rare refreshing mountain air.

The winter months they spent abroad or at their home in Washington. They visited their old Southern home on the banks of the Cumberland

frequently, and Mr. Homean always, of course, gave them a cheerful welcome.

* * * * * * * *

One bright, beautiful afternoon, warm with sunshine, Leland Burnett sat with his happy wife and beautiful two-year-old daughter on the sofa which had been drawn out on the veranda of "Gethsemane," and they watched the glorious luminary of day paint the glowing western horizon with brilliant colors of crimson and gold as he sank in his pompous splendor. The glory of the dying day touched everything with consummate beauty. The beautiful, sloping valley in front of them looked like the dreamy vista leading to a new, undiscovered paradise. The polystyle aisle of the deep forest glades filled with a golden haze something like the fabulous Golden Fleece, then turned to a crimson glow that was beautiful to behold. The forest colonnades stood like long rows of pillared Parthenons on each side of the shadowy road down through the valley. The valley reminded one of the beautiful romantic valley of Tempe in Thessaly between Mounts Olympia and Ossa, through which the Peneuse escapes into the sea. The lovely scenery of this glen was so charming that one wonders if the fabulous Apollo did not, in traditional days, celebrate it as one of his favorite haunts.

The mournful cooing of doves broke the solemn silence as the day died; and the cool shadow of approaching night crept softly over the dreamy valley of "Gethsemane."

Mamie Homean Dillion kissed the pretty pouting lips of her sweet child and looked up into the

face of her noble husband. Leland put his arm around Mamie and put his hand under her chin, drew her lips to his, and kissed them tenderly; then he drew her face to his bosom.

"Darling, do you remember that once, in my sinful past, you told me that I was possessed with devils?"

Mamie laughed softly and said:

"You were then."

"Yes, you are right."

He waited a moment.

"Do you think so still?" he asked.

"Leland, why do you ask so simple a question?" she asked petulantly, as she looked up at him with a sweet smile.

"I was thinking that if I was then I might be now."

The pretty child nestled her golden curly head in her mother's lap and fell asleep as Leland and Mamie talked on sweet and low of the grand old days of long ago. They were happy now. They loved their home; they loved God; they loved everybody; they loved their pretty babe; and they loved each other. Lilian Naomi, as they called their child, was the living picture of her mother in features; but she had beautiful sunny golden hair, deep, strangely passionate blue eyes and a bright cheerful face beaming with childish joy and innocency. They loved her as no other parents ever did; they thought they did.

Mamie felt her husband's arm tighten around her waist as he bowed his head to hers:

"My darling, you forgave me my cruelty to you long ago. You were slow to yield your life

to me; many a lonely hour I have longed and waited and hoped for you to come to me. I went to Iceland many times and looked yearningly and fondly at you when you thought I was thousands of miles away from you. I was patient, and at last you came to me, and now I know this world holds no man so happy, so thankful, so proud as I am! Mamie, my love for you is a love that is born of heaven, and I know I shall always love the pure noble girl who rescued me from a wretched and ruined life of infidelity and brought me to the feet of Jesus!"

He tenderly kissed the pure lips of his beautiful wife and said: "Now say the words I love to hear you say."

"'I have fallen prostrate at the feet of a king—that king is Love—that Love is you!' Leland, I love you." Her voice was sweet and low.

The light slowly faded in the west, and it was night.

"That is it; I have always wanted to hear you say those words. Good-night."

THE END.

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